

Resident Halo

by Neo Pryde

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Summary: The Covenant War is over. Humanity is at peace; or is it?

Deep underground, something has been released, something like the Flood, only worse and it's up to a group of ODSTs to stop it! Chapter 7 up! Reviews, and Critiques welcome. 50 percent done!

1. Prologue: Dark Beginnings

Resident Halo Prologue Earth Calendar January 31, 2553.

New Mombassa, Earth.

"Headlong" Sector.

The sound of muffled thumps echoed in the floor, as four black-armored ODSTs ran up the staircase. Behind them, a dozen moaning zombies, chased after them.

"Roar!" shouted one of the zombies, and it tried to say something else, but its vocal cords were long since ripped out, and it made nothing but gibberish. One of the ODSTs turned, with dual M6Cs in hand, fired a round from each.

"Eat this," he said. The bullets connected with the zombie's head, and his body tumbled down. One of the figures turned, and ran after the body, shouting wild things after it.

The ODST emptied both of his clips into the oncoming horde, and ejected the spent clips, as he dashed up the staircase, following his fellow comrades. He jumped over a barricade of boxes, set up by the Humans on their last stand here. The ODSTs waited, weapons drawn.

Pica, one of the four, had a Warthog chain-gun, taken from the Warthog that one of the earlier survivors managed to bring into the base, pointed squarely at the corridor where the boxes were set up. The ODSTs had made stand here earlier, but the zombies had

overwhelmed the defenses, and the ODSs were forced to retreat by jumping out of a nearby window, and down to the corridor below. A squad of Marines had accompanied them earlier, but now they had joined the ranks of the zombies attacking them.

The ODSs, with the zombies behind them, managed to arrive at Main Street, and held off an advance for two hours, until, until _something_ arrived. Half of the ODSs were taken out, half by the new arrival, the others by the hungry, and savage zombies.

The last five ODSs retreated, back to the building they were in now, nicknamed _the_ Base. But not before the fifth ODS, Navy, was promptly ambushed, and killed by a zombie. Now he, too, wandered with the green team horde.

One of the zombies moaned, and slowly made his way up the staircase, and approached the barricade. The leader of the ODSs recognized him, he was part of his squad: Ramos.

Behind Ramos, three more zombies followed, and jumped up over the railing next to the corridor, three more swung their way through the barricade, sending boxes flying, and three more behind them brought up the rear.

"My, they must really want us," remarked Pica.

"Let 'em have it!" shouted Neo, the leader of the ODSs. Pica opened up with the LAAG, unloading thousands of rounds into the nine attacking zombies. Reaver and Chaos, the other two ODSs fired too, giving support with their SMGs and Magnums. The angry zombies crumpled before the onslaught. The nine fell, and the air was quiet. Black smoke still hung in the air. One of them tried to get up and slash the ODSs, but Reaver promptly hit him in the head with the butt of his Magnum. Neo, Reaver, and Chaos reloaded their guns, while Pica watched over them with her LAAG.

"We got lucky that time!" exclaimed Reaver. "Don't you think we should move on, sir?"

"It's only a matter of time now," said Neo. "The city is probably overrun by now, and there must be hundreds outside, waiting for us. This is, most likely, the safest place in all of New Mombassa. Unless something miraculous happens, we probably won't be leaving here, alive."

"Those damn bastardsâ€¦why did they have to release this virus across the city?" Asked an angry Chaos.

"I don't think they did it on purpose. I doubt even the Covenant would do something like this," Neo said.

"Yeah right," Chaos retorted. And he sat down onto one of the boxes that had been knocked away from the door. The group lay silent for a moment, but Reaver spoke up.

"I have an idea, hold on," he said, and he slowly crouched over to the window at his left, weapons in pointing upward. He looked outside, and activated his helmet's binocular vision. He took a quick sweep of the city, and stealth fully crouched back to Neo.

"Alright, it's clear down there, surprisingly. Those ugly bastards must have found a nice little orphanage or something," Reaver said, grimly. "There are two Warthogs across from us, parked near that incomplete building. They're probably no more than 500 yards away; we can quickly get in and get out of here."

"Good. They might also have a workable radio, we can use it to contact for some backup from Umbrella Corp, or the UNSC." Muffled thumps resounded from the stairway below them, and the whole team quickly brought their weapons to ready: aimed at the corridor and stairs in front of them.

"They're comin', sir. We should probably roll out now," said Reaver. Neo nodded to Reaver, turned, and nodded to Pica, made a few gestures, and Pica nodded back, she aimed her chain-gun squarely at the stairs. Neo dashed to the window and leaped out, with Reaver and Chaos behind him. The trio landed on the catwalk below the Base, and jumped down once more, and made a straight dash towards the pair of Warthogs.

Behind them, chain-gun fire rattled from the Base, and muffled thumps hit the floor of the third story of the Base. Neo jumped into the driver seat of one, while Reaver clambered up into the turret, and Chaos got into the passenger seat. Neo looked up to the window. The chain-gun fire stopped, but Neo could not discern any movement coming from the Base. Damn, they must have got her. Zombies jumped out from the window, and ran out of both exits of the Base, and Neo decided that he wasn't going to be waiting any longer. He hit the accelerator, and drove straight into the horde of zombies. They clawed at the Warthog, smelling the fresh meat of the humans.

Three of them were run over, and the Warthog continued onward, unrelenting. Chaos and Reaver didn't let up on their trigger fingers. Thousands of rounds were launched from the Warthogs, and the attacking zombies were quickly mowed down. Neo started driving to Main Street, where they had held out earlier. Chaos turned on the radio.

"To any Human forces, civilian or military in the area, this is ODSI Special Team Alpha, sent into the Hive to terminate the spread of the T-Virus. Does anyone read me, over? We require immediate evac." Chaos spoke rather urgently, and Neo noticed this. He couldn't help but thinking, his best man on his team was nervous? Neo got nervous at that thought too.

The radio was silent for a few moments, but a muffled voice responded. "This is Umbrella Corporation Pelican Victor 907. Your situation is understood, and we have you on our sites. Negative on your request; it's too hot down there to make a safe landing. Most of the city has been evacuated anyway. Rumor has it that New Mombassa is getting nuked in a few hours, we need to be out of here now. Sorry we can't help, Victor 907 out."

"Damn!" shouted Chaos, slamming his fist into the radio.

"What now, sir?" asked Reaver.

"I suggest we go to the station, and see how long we can hold out till someone else—"

"Wait!" shouted Reaver. "Look! The city Second Street block is _open. _Now's our chance to get out of here!" True to what he said, the massive, Titanium-A doors that blocked off traffic, and were used often during the Covenant invasion to divide the Covenant, and now to keep the zombies in the city, were open.

"Not so fast, soldier." Neo held up his hand, but the Warthog swerved, and he quickly put it back on the steering wheel. "While it might mean our way out, it also mean's _their _way out too. We have to reseal the gate, _and _get out of here alive," said Neo, as calmly as he could.

"That's suicide, sir. We can't seal the gate, and get out of here alive," responded Reaver.

"I know, but it's our duty. If our deaths mean that billions, and I mean _billions_ of lives will be saved by the death of all these zombies, and not spread out to the rest of the world, then it's worth it."

"Right, sir." Neo drove the Warthog back onto the main road, and onto the bridge which lead to the open gate butâ€|

"Sir! Look out! The bridge is still incomplete!" Shouted Reaver. Neo didn't try to slam on the brakes, instead he pushed the Warthog to it's maximum speed, and the Warthog flew right over the massive crane that was in between the gate and the bridge andâ€|

CRASH! The Warthog had safely landed on the other side.

"Whew!" exhaled Neo, in triumph. "Now we just have to figure out how to seal the gate off, and keep these creeps here."

"That's not going to be easy, sir," said Chaos, as he pointed all around the Warthog. Neo looked around, and gasped. Thousands of zombies from all sides charged at the Warthog, clawing for blood, and moaning rather loudly.

"Oh shit."

2. Into the Hive

Resident Halo

Chapter One

Date unknown and location unknown.

>United Nations Space Command Classified Record (TOP SECRET
CLEARANCE REQUIRED) <p>

_Accessing classified holo-tape. Produced by ODST Charles "Neo"
O'Neil. Classified by UNSC HighCom at request of Umbrella
Corporation. Standbyâ€|_

Loadingâ€|

"**M**y name is Neo. I was the head of security at a secret,
underground research facility for an organization called Umbrella.

The Umbrella Corporation was the largest commercial entity in the world, and in the UNSC. Umbrella was rivaled only by the UNSC in size and sheer manpower.

The Umbrella Corporation supplied the citizens of the UNSC with many products, most of them were civilian, items such as food, water, and many pleasure conveniences. But unknown to even Umbrella's employees, this was not their major source of income. Umbrella secretly supplied the UNSC with bio-weapons, secret shield technology, prototype plasma weapons, and even manufactured the MJOLNIR Armor for the Spartan Project; which was used heavily during the Covenant War.

We were on the brink of losing, until the Reclaimer Å-Xzaalbarth came, and with the Spartans, beats back the Covenant. The Halo data, brought back by Spartan-117, and some dead Flood samples were given to Umbrella Corporation for processing, and research, in order to develop new technologies to give us the upper hand in the war.

The special weapons on the Iroquois, the energy shields, the refined plasma turrets, the Nova bombs, all of them were Umbrella products. The UNSC owed everything to Umbrella, almost, if not more than the Spartans.

When John-117 returned back at Earth with the Halo data, Umbrella immediately started looking it over. The technological advances they made saved Earth from total annihilation. But that wasn't the only thing. Private Abu-Hama Rasheed had arrived with the Master Chief, hiding in seclusion. He was once human, now he was Flood.

Rasheed had helped command the fleet, and despite the resentment of his fellow officers, and distrust, he served the UNSC faithfully, and loyally. Unfortunately, in the final moments of the last Battle of Earth, he died. No one knows how, or why, but he died, nonetheless. Some speculate it was heart failure. Others think a UNSC Marine went crazy and killed him. Most think it was suicide.

However he died didn't matter for Umbrella, for the first time, they had a Flood specimen, an intact one. Rasheed was dissected and analyzed, and the research they obtained from Rasheed's corpse was very valuable. The fruits of their research that day, and from the Halo data all cumulated into one product: the T-Virus.

The T-Virus can regenerate, or reanimate, dead or living cells. Much like how Sergeant Johnson possessed regenerative abilities with dead Flood cells. Well, the T-Virus does this, but on a larger scale. The T-Virus can reanimate even the dead, and is highly contagious. If airborne, it immediately infects all who are dead, and they become zombies.

One scratch, one bite from these zombies is enough to transfer the virus. The T-Virus had enormous commercial potential, but it also could be used as a bio-weapon for the UNSC. Aware of the consequences of such power, Umbrella kept the T-Virus locked away, hidden in the three secret research facilities: the Hives. A Hive was located in Tokyo, New Mombassa, and Raccoon City.

But there was an incident. And the T-Virus was released, one after another at each of the Hives. The A.I.s at each Hive took measures to keep the virus in check, and everyone who worked at the Hives died. My team was sent in to the New Mombassa Hive, to deal with the A.I.

and find out what had happened to make them become homicidal.

This is my story.

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Earth Calendar January 23, 2553.

>New Mombassa, Earth.
Umbrella Corporation Secret Underground Research Facility "The Hive".

It was another bright day at the Hive. Well, you could say a "bright one". Since the Hive was underground, the windows, which were in place at the Hive, had holographic projectors, which were made to seem like the world outside, and right now, it was sunny at New Mombassa, and thus sunny at the Hive.

Carl Shagan was walking along, minding his own business, with coffee and newspaper at hand, and waited for the elevator to arrive. Someone bumped into him, and his precious coffee was splattered all over his shirt.

"Thank you," Carl said, sarcastically; as a young man walked past him, hefting a brief case. One of the nearby workers looked at the young man, and at Carl, and offered him a towel, which he accepted. He wiped himself off, just in time for the elevator to arrive. The workers walked inside the elevator, and the doors shut, as the elevator proceeded to descend.

Several levels below, in the Viral Research Room, dozens of dogs were kept for research. The dogs were sleeping happily, until one of them smelled—well he smelled something airborne, and it bothered him. He got up on all fours, and started barking, in an attempt to warn their masters, and his fellow dogs. The others smelled it to, and they started barking.

A pair of humans in white lab coats walked through the door in a separate chamber -on the same level as the Viral Research Room - a male and a female. The two talked among themselves, unaware of the danger that literally filled the air. An alarm sounded, and the humans in the chamber looked around.

"What's that?" asked one.

"Nothing," responded another. "Just a routine fire drill."

As the dozens of lab-workers calmly filed out of the room, the main doors hissed shut, and the access panel flashed red. The fire alarm continued to blare, and Carl, still in the elevator looked up from the files he was reading, and turned to the worker who had given him a towel. "What's that?" he asked.

"Fire drill," she replied.

In the Viral and Research room, the main doors were still locked, and the sprinkler system activated.

"Shit!" yelled a female worker.

"What the hell" asked a male worker.

"Hurry! The computer's covered!" screamed the female worker. "Move it! Hurry! Or the experiments will be ruined!" The dogs continued to bark, and did so more vigorously than before, aware of the danger. A nearby security guard tried to calm the dogs down.

Carl, anxiously, pushed aside a few nearby workers, and moved to the control panel of the elevator. "Shouldn't the doors open, or something?" he asked, trying to contain his fear.

"It's supposed to take us to the nearest floor," said one of the workers. The lights in the elevator flashed off, and blue emergency lights hissed on. The power drained from the elevator, and in the rest of the Hive. The workers were much more worried now. This wasn't a routine fire drill. The female worker that gave Carl the towel earlier picked up the emergency phone, which would have power regardless of the elevator.

"Hello?" she asked. No response. "Hello?" she asked again. She pressed some buttons on the panel, and received no response.

"What's happening?" asked Carl.

"Line's dead," responded the worker.

Two levels below, the workers were realizing the gravity of the situation. An attractive blonde female got up from her desk, and casually walked over to the crowd of anxious workers.

"What's the problem?" she asked.

"The doors won't open!" responded a worker.

"What about the one's in the back?" asked the blonde.

"Locked as well," someone replied.

In the Viral Research Room, a female worker was starting to lose it; she waved her hands and screamed at a security camera, which was controlled by the Hive's Artificial Intelligence, which in turn, controlled all functions at the Hive.

"There's no fire in here! No fire!" yelled the woman. The sprinklers continued, as the AI ignored the woman's screams. A man was trying to push open the doors.

"The code doesn't work! The doors won't open!" he yelled. "This water isn't going anywhere."

"What?" screamed the woman.

"It's a sealed room," responded the man.

"Help me with the doors," the woman said.

"Oh fuck the doors!" shouted another man. He pulled out an ax from the wall, and ran screaming at the glass windows. He struck, and a chunk of glass was taken out, but the window itself was intact. He struck over, and over again, but the window wouldn't break.

On the elevator above, the workers had lost it. They started slamming on the doors, and screaming for help.

"We have to get out of here!" said one.

"What's going on?" asked Carl, as he hit the emergency alarm. "Has this happened before? WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE! We have to get out of here!"

"Take it easy," said a black man.

>"No! You take it easy!" shouted Carl. <p>

"QUIET!" yelled the female worker. "Do you hear that?"

"What?" asked Carl.

Seconds later, a delayed scream raced past the elevator, and plummeted downward, and faded, faded, until it stopped. A crash reverberated through the elevator Carl was in.

"Oh my God," said the female. And shortly after she said that, the elevator that they were in dropped down, as the brakes were released. Everyone inside screamed. On the panel nearby, the levels raced by. Fifteen, fourteen, thirteen— At the third floor, the elevator stopped.

Meanwhile, the attractive blonde, and all the other workers continued pounding on the doors, hoping for someone to hear them. The biohazard alarm sounded, a gas was released from the vents, and workers left and right dropped to the floor, coughing.

"Stop it! Stop!" shouted the blonde, in vain at the security camera. As the room filled with the white, deadly gas, the blonde slowly felt the life drain out of her, and then—

Thud. Everyone in the room was dead. On the same floor, the elevator doors budged open slightly, and Carl and the others looked outside the door, and saw—everyone was dead. Carl, who was sweating, couldn't take it anymore.

"We have to get out of here! We need to call for help!"

"Here! Give me a hand," shouted a male, who was still working on the doors. "This is as far as they'll go. They're caught on something.

"That's wide enough," said the female. "I can squeeze through. I'll get help." She managed to squeeze her head and arm through the door. "It's stuck! You're gonna have to push." A security camera flashed to life nearby, and accessed the female's vital statistics, and recorded data. "That's it! A bit more!" she shouted.

Something hissed. "What's that?" asked Carl.

"Fuck!" shouted a male. "It's the brakes! Get her out of there!"

"I can't move!"

"We have to get out of here!" The brakes released, and the females head rapidly descended from the top of the doors, to the bottom, and

thenâ€¦. stopped. The female was breathing rapidly, and shivered in fear.

"Pull me back inside!" she managed to shout. The elevator ascended, as they tried to free her, and CRACK! Her head thudded to the third floor, and her body to the floor of the elevator.

"I think I'm going to be sick," said Carl, averting his gaze. The brakes hissed again. "Oh. Shit." And the elevator plummeted down.

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Meanwhile, above ground in New Mombassa, inside a massive white mansion, Security Chief Chuck "Neo" O'Neil kicked back, and lit up a cigarette.

"I love my job," Neo said. It was just another easy day on the job for Neo, who guarded the entrance to the Hive at the Keyes Mansion, which was the only way in and out of the Hive, and was safely hundreds miles above ground from the Hive. An alarm sounded, and Neo quickly dropped his cigarette.

"What the hell?" The alarm continued, and the display in front of him flashed: Intruder alert. Before Neo could draw his sidearm, and investigate the cause of the alarm, the glass windows a few meters away from him were shattered, and a dozen armed men and women in standard ODST armor jumped through, Battle Rifles, Magnums, and SMGs drawn. His partner, Niles "Reaver" Roberto drew his M6D, and pointed it at the ODSTs.

"What the hell are you doing? You have no right to be here!" An ODST turned to him, and primed a flash grenade and tossed it at Reaver and Neo. The ODST quickly cuffed Reaver, and punched the weapon out of his hand. Another ODST walked over to the main entrance that Neo guarded, and tapped into the security system, and opened up a handheld computer, and rapidly typed in commands into it. The other ODSTs pointed their weapons at the corridors, and Neo.

Neo dropped his weapon, and held his hands up. "What's your business here?" He asked. The ODST leader walked over to Neo, and in his HUD, his name, rank, and decorations flashed. Neo was able to read it. Captain Samuel Duran; UNSC Special Forces, New Mombassa Garrison.

"That's of none of your concern," replied Duran.

"I'm the Head of Security of this facility," said Neo. "If there is a problem, it's plenty of my business." Duran said nothing, but the man with the handheld computer typed away some keys, nodded, and Duran spoke.

"I won't discuss it here, we might be watched."

"By who?" asked Neo.

"I'm not liable to discuss it right now," responded Duran. "Come with us, if you want to know."

"Where are you going?"

"We're going to the Hive." And with that, the doors hissed open, and half of the ODS'Ts stormed in, flashlights, and weapons active.

"What about him?" asked the ODS'T who had cuffed Reaver. "Shall I secure him here?"

Duran took his helmet off. He was a dark man, with black eyes. He was bald, and was wearing a green beret. A headset with a microphone was on his right ear. "No. We take him with us."

"You can't do this!" shouted Reaver, as the ODS'T holstered her pistol. She took her helmet off, and black hair, which was tied in a ponytail dropped down her shoulder.

"Blow me." And she grabbed an irritated Reaver by the arms, and forced him up, and pushed him along.

"Prep for entry to the Hive," Duran said. And the dozen ODS'Ts, with Neo and an angry Reaver in tow, passed through the two-meter thick, Titanium-A doors. After all of them had entered, the doors hissed shut behind them. Half the ODS'Ts rushed on ahead, weapons pointing ahead, as they ran down a massive staircase. The other half brought up the rear, with Neo, Reaver, Duran, and the female ODS'T in the middle.

Thousands of boxes and trucks littered the room that they had entered, all with the Umbrella Corporation logo emblazoned on them. The ODS'Ts cautiously inspected the equipment, and hefted some of the equipment on to a nearby, electric train. Another placed a timer on a wall near the doorway to the Hive storage room, and numbers appeared: _48:00:00_, and counted down, _47:59:59_, _47:59:58_—|

The ODS'Ts boarded the electric train, and dropped the box of equipment. One of the ODS'Ts, the one with the handheld computer installed in his suit tried to activate the train. "Power's down," he said, taking his helmet off, and placing it on a nearby crate, his black eyes were cool as he spoke.

"So fix it," Duran said.

The ODS'T with the ponytail responded. "I'm on it," and she activated her suit's flashlight, and jumped through the massive hole in the middle of the train compartment that lead to the power. She connected the massive power cylinders together, but as she was doing this, she thought she heard movement. She drew her pistol, and crouched down, aiming at the source of the sound.

Nothing. The only thing she saw was a circular hole in the metal wire plate that separated this compartment and the next one's air vents. The sound continued, but it simply sounded like water dropping. She holstered her pistol, and resumed connecting the power cylinders.

Suddenly, an ODS'T stuck his head through the hole above the ponytail ODS'T, as she was about to connect the other power cylinders. She jumped in surprise. "Jumpy," he said, and laughed. She restored power, and he pulled his head out of the hole, in surprise. The ponytail ODS'T grinned, and jumped out of the hole. The lights flickered on inside the train, and the last ODS'Ts climbed aboard.

"Stand clear," said an ODST, and the massive doors, which lead to the power hole closed. An ODST punched in some numbers, and train sputtered to life, and began to accelerate. The ponytail ODST tried to open a locked door, and turned to Reaver and Neo, who were sitting and staring at the ODST.

"You got a problem?" she asked.

"How's that door?" asked Duran.

"It's sealed shut."

The ODST who stuck his head down, and surprised the ponytail ODST walked over to the door. "Let me," he said, and he shoved the door open. A man, with a backpack on, and who was unconscious fell into the ODST's arms. Duran pointed his Battle Rifle squarely at the man.

"Jumpy?" asked the ponytail ODST to the other. He glared at her. The man awoke, and another ODST, with her helmet off, pulled out a small flashlight.

"Lie still!" she demanded. "Watch this light. Follow it." The man complied. "Now how many fingers am I holding up?"

"Three," responded the man.

"Good. Now tell me your name."

"Iâ€¦I don't know," he responded.

"He's fine. Memory loss, that's all."

The train skidded to a halt a few moments later, and the man, Neo, Reaver, and the ODSTs exited the train, and into another storage room. The ODSTs drew their weapons, and kept watch for anything, other than them, that moved. The ponytail ODST ran up ahead, and after verifying that the area was clear, nodded to Duran.

"Let's open that door," he said. And the humans ran to the main Hive entrance.

Neo had had enough, and he walked up to Duran. "Listen to me," he said. "Look at me! I want to know who you are, and what the fuck is going on here!"

Duran looked at Neo, and spoke. "While I maybe UNSC special forces, I am actually in the employ of the Umbrella Corporation, just like you. The mansion above us, as you know, is the emergency entrance to the Hive, and usually the most used entrance. The Hive, which you also know, is a secret research facility, and houses 500 technicians and scientists, and its purpose is naturally, is classified. I'm sure you have never actually been inside the Hive."

Neo nodded his head negatively.

"I thought so." A pair of ODSTs was attempting to open the door with a laser wielder as Duran was talking.

"What about your mission? Why are you here? You must have been on your way to the mansion, and for some time in the air before the intruder alarm sounded. Why didn't it sound earlier?" asked Neo.

"Sir! We've breached the Hive," said an ODSST.

Duran looked at the ODSST, and then at Neo. "I guess you'll have to wait for the answer to that question." Neo fumed, but Duran didn't seem to notice. The ODSSTs scrambled around the main entrance, and one ODSST, with his infrared settings activated entered the Hive. The ODSST crept in slowly, as he was engulfed by darkness. He heard something move, and spun in the direction of the sound, but just like the ponytail girlâ€¦heard nothing more.

"Got it!" the ODSST said, and the emergency lights activated.

"Gas content has dissipated, it's safe to explore. And the ODSSTs did just that. The ODSSTs tried to open the elevator doors, and had succeeded. Duran looked down, and dropped a flare. It touched the bottom after a several second drop, and hit the remains of the destroyed elevator. "Looks like we're taking the stars."

And the ODSSTs ran to the staircase, kicked open the door, and raced down the stairs.

"Status?"

"Shadow has locked onto us. He knows we're hear."

"Shadow?" asked Neo. "Who is Shadow?"

"The defenses of the Hive are all controlled by the AI. We were sent here by Umbrella to inspect a disturbance. Five hours ago, Shadow, who is the AI that controls the Hive, went homicidal. Our job is to find out why, shut down Shadow, and to extradite any survivors."

The ODSSTs reached the ground floor of the Hive, even though ground floor wasn't exactly an appropriate name, considering that the Hive's top floor was still very, very much below the ground. They ran past the room that was once the Viral Research Room, and holes were poked in the glass. Water was slowly leaking out of the room, but it wasn't fast, as the water was still near the top of the room. Papers floated around in the brown water.

The ponytail ODSST, who Neo had finally had a chance to read her nametag, Sparks, looked around the corridors to make sure they were clear. They were. The ODSST with the computer, approached the glass, and said: "This, is going to slow us down considerably." He glanced at his computer. "Our original route to Shadow takes us straight through these labs."

Duran nodded. "Sparks, J.B., see how bad it is in there." He marched past the two ODSSTs. "Lockley, find us an alternate route." The computer ODSST nodded, who Neo inferred was Lockley, and he typed away rapidly on his computer. As Duran and the other ODSSTs waited for Lockley to find a route, a body drifted towards the glass, and Reaver jumped away from the glass.

"Jesus!" He shouted. The other ODS'Ts whipped their guns up to the body. Reaver backed away from the glass some more. Neo turned to Reaver. "Hey? You ok?" Reaver nodded.

"Sir, I've found a route! But it's going to take us some extra time. We need to double back to the dining hall, the auxiliary one, then we'll be at where we need to be!" Shouted Lockley. Duran grinned. Reaver looked up at an air vent that was above him, and thought he heardâ€¦a _moan_. Sparks and J.B. had returned.

"Sir? It's not good, this whole sector has been flooded."

"All right then, let's move out to the auxiliary dining hall, we're getting behind schedule," said Duran. As they walked away, Sparks and J.B. stopped to look at the body that had drifted towards the glass.

"Poor bastards," commented Sparks, and she walked away with the rest of the group.

The body continued drifting as the ODS'Ts had disappeared, but suddenly, the body's arm jolted up onto the glass, and its eyes darted open. It was time to feed.

3. Release

Resident Halo

Chapter Two

Earth Calendar January 23, 2553.

New Mombassa, Earth.

Umbrella Corporation Secret Underground Research Facility "The Hive".

The ODS'Ts kept their weapons drawn on the heavy one-meter thick doors that lead to the auxiliary dining hall. Lockley cracked the code to the door, and it opened. Sparks swept the hallway, and motioned for the others to follow. The ODS'Ts stormed through the door, and into the auxiliary dining hall.

But it wasn't a dining hall. Instead of tables, chairs, and food plates, the room was filled with dozens and dozens of cryo chambers and storage tanks for the sub-zero freezing liquid. A few ODS'Ts went up to the chambers, and peered inside.

"Lockley!" shouted a confused Duran.

"Auxiliary dining hall," replied Lockley, looking at his computer. "That's what it says on the map." Duran walked up to Lockley, and looked on to the computer.

"Maybe you're reading it wrong," he said.

"Maybe the corporation is keeping a few secrets down here. Something they don't want us to see." said Reaver. Neo looked at the man from

the train, he had said little, and didn't seem surprised at what was in the room. Neo had remembered his name along the way to the "dining hall", Kamo. The man seemed familiar on a picture he saw somewhere. Neo shrugged, it didn't matter where he remembered Kamo's name, and just that he knew it.

Duran, and the other ODSs looked at Reaver with suspicion. "J.B." said Duran. J.B. stepped forward, and nodded. "I want you and Sparks to stay here with the prisoner. Stay here and secure the exit."

The medic ODS of the team spoke. "Captain! Gas levels in this room are nonexistent. The vent system in this room may have malfunctioned."

Duran nodded. "Alright. That means there maybe survivors. I want a search line, but keep it tight. We don't want any surprises from Shadow." The ODSs, Neo, and Kamo nodded, and separated. Sparks pushed Reaver, and they walked in a different direction from the group.

Neo drew his M6C pistol that the ODSs had not noticed. He had a bad feeling about this. Neo walked up to a cryo tube, and peered in. The windows were condensed with fog, and Neo had to use pistol hand to clear away some of it. He saw something, something that was black and red, with wiring protruding inside, but he couldn't make out much of the details of the actual thing inside.

Duran tapped Neo on the shoulder, and Neo spun around, pistol aimed at Duran. "I thought you were unarmed?" Neo grinned. "I guess not. Judging by the situation, and the fact you seem trustworthy, I'll let you keep it. Quit dawdling, I told you to keep things tight."

"Sorry," replied Neo. "I was curious, that's all."

"I don't blame you. Try to keep your eyes open. Don't let curiosity get in the way." Duran walked off.

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Five minutes later, after finding no survivors, Duran, Neo, Kamo, Lockley, and five other ODSs proceeded into Shadow's Control Chamber. The Chamber itself was separated into two sub-sections, which were connected by a small hallway. The first section controlled Shadow's defenses, and oversaw the AI. The second contained Shadow's primary AI core.

Duran waited patiently as Lockley attempted to open the blast doors that separated the first chamber and the small corridor to the other chamber. Neo was looking through the small window on the blast door, trying to analyze the corridor, looking for any unseen traps that he might not know about.

The medic ODS however wasn't as patient as Duran. "What's taking so long?" she asked.

"Shadow's defenses are in place. This is going to take a little longer. He's making thingsâ€¦difficult." A beep sounded, and the blast door opened. Neo drew his pistol instantly, and peered down the corridor. It was clear.

"Let's roll out." The other five ODSs took out the equipment from the crate they liberated earlier, and placed it inside a medium sized bag, and one of the ODSs slung it around his shoulder. Duran walked up to the entrance. "Stay here," he said to Neo, who nodded in response. Duran crouched down, unslung his battle rifle from his shoulder, and entered the corridor.

The corridor was one meter wide, and twenty long, and completely dark. The sidewalls were lined with glass, which reflected the light outside. Duran slowly walked through the corridor. When he was halfway to the second chamber, the lights in the corridor activated. Duran pointed wildly with his battle rifle, and glanced at Lockley.

"The lights are automated," Lockley said. "Nothing to worry about." Duran nodded, and continued. He reached the end of the corridor, and placed a small device, with a radio receiver sticking out, onto a patch of metal on the large blast doors. "Transmitter in position."

"Roger. Running bypass program." Numbers scrolled across the computer screen, and Lockley grinned. The digits were transmitted to the transmitter that Duran had placed, and the door opened. "Checkmate." Duran stood to the side of the door as it opened. He walked into the chamber, and made sure it was clear.

"Come on!" he said to the other five ODSs. The ODSs walked to the other end of the corridor, and into Shadow's chamber. The blast doors on both sides of the corridor abruptly shut. "Lockley! What's going on!"

Lockley typed away rapidly at the computer. "Some kind of dormant defense mechanism. I'm trying to shut it down." Advanced, state of the art plasma cannons activated in Shadow's chamber, and whined to life. The ODSs dropped the bag unceremoniously, and aimed their weapons at the cannons. One of them charged up plasma, and fired at one of the ODSs. He rolled to the side, but part of his hand was incinerated off.

He fell to the floor, screaming. Duran dropped next to the ODS, trying to keep the man calm. The other four ODSs brought their SMGs, Pistols, and Battle Rifles to bear, and fired. Empty cartridges littered the floor as they fired. A shield activated around the plasma cannon, protecting it. The ODS who had lost his hand was still screaming. The cannon charged up, and fired again. The charged plasma connected with the medic, and her head was vaporized.

Duran looked away, his eyes were filled with fear.

"Open the damn door!" shouted Neo.

"I'm trying!" Lockley shouted back.

"Stay conscious!" shouted Duran to the ODS. "You're going into shock." The ODS was still screaming. Duran put his mouth about an inch away from the ODS and screamed as loud as he could: "STAY AWAKE!"

"Sir!" said one of the three uninjured ODSs. "It's charging again!" Duran scrambled up to his feet, and the cannon fired three times at

the ODS'Ts. One of the bursts was aimed at an ODS'T's feet, and he jumped up, but the charge immediately zoomed upward, and hit the ODS'T in the chest, and he was vaporized.

The other two ODS'Ts weren't as lucky. One of them took a hit to the side, and he dropped to the floor, screaming. The other was hit in the crotch, and fell to the ground, dead. The cannons then, abruptly shut down. Duran looked around the room in surprise. "Lockley, did you get it?" he asked, trying to conceal his astonishment.

"Sir, I didn't." Just then, a different warning blared on Lockley's computer: _Level 5 defense mechanism activated. _A continuous laser charged up on two sides of the octagonal shaped room, and was racing after Duran, aimed at his neck. Duran looked up, found a metal girder running along the room, and jumped up, and lifted his legs up quickly, and made his body as straight as possible.

Alarms were going off in the first chamber, and the room was in utter chaos. Neo was screaming at the door, screaming for it to be opened. Kamo was yelling at Lockley to open the door, which screamed back that he was trying as hard as he could.

The laser, however, kept going, but sliced off half of Duran's SMG that was holstered. Duran jumped down, as the laser disappeared. Then, the laser grid charged up again, and a single laser, going horizontally across raced after Duran again. Duran got into a martial arts stance, preparing himself for it.

The laser then shifted from one line, to a complex grid of lasers, and Duran swore. The lasers swiped cleanly through Duran, and stopped as they finished their way through his body. The system shut down, and the doors opened. Duran's body collapsed into thousands of smaller chunks. Neo and Kamo looked away in disgust, and Lockley stared at the spot where his former commander was, in complete, and utter horror.

Lockley was shivering as he rose from the computer table. "Alright," he barely managed to say. "Let's do it." Kamo screamed at him.

"Do what!"

Lockley was still shivering. "We have to complete the mission."

"There is no way I'm going in there," said Kamo.

Lockley tried to reassure Kamo, but ineffectively, as he spoke in fear. "His defenses are down."

"DÃ©jÃ vu, anyone?" asked Kamo sarcastically. Lockley looked like he was about to just pass out right there, but he gulped, and walked around the desk, and slowly proceeded through the corridor, and into Shadow's Chamber. He averted his gaze at the destroyed and mangled bodies, and in vain, reached for the bag. Neo picked up the bag, and put an arm on Lockley's shoulder.

"It's alright," Neo said. "I've seen these kind of things back in the Covenant War. I know what it's like to lose a good team." Lockley nodded at Neo, and Neo handed him the bag. Lockley unzipped the bag, and prepared to go to work. Kamo looked at Neo in surprise. "You were

in the war?" he asked. Neo turned to Kamo, and nodded.

"Were you?" Neo asked.

"No." The door to Shadow's chamber sealed shut.

Lockley typed away rapidly on his keyboard and a massive, cylinder shaped pole arose from the center of the room: Shadow's Mainframe. Lockley turned to Neo, as he was getting the parts out from the bag. "Can you give me a hand?" Neo nodded, and the two men took an equally massive object, the size of an ancient 21st century desktop hard-drive, and placed it inside Shadow's mainframe.

A camera activated, and turned towards the three men. A trio of black lasers were projected from the walls, and created a holograph. The holograph resembled a tall man in a black robe, with a hood. The figure had two, massive demon wings jutting out from his back. Two, fiery red-eyes were floating inside the hood.

"Get out. Beware. Danger lurks in these hallways." The holograph said, in a deep voice. Neo and Kamo turned to face the holograph, but Lockley kept working.

"Don't listen to anything he says," said Lockley. "He's a holographic representation of Shadow. He'll try to do anything to stay online."

"You have to get out," said Shadow, ignoring what the others said.

Lockley continued to install the EMP generator into Shadow's mainframe. "I wouldn't advice this course of action. Disabling me will result in the loss of primary power all over this facility."

"Don't listen to him."

"I beg off you."

Lockley finished the installation, turned toward Shadow's menacing figure, and pulled out a remote.

"Beg away." He flipped open the glass protector of the button on the remote. The generator charged to maximum power.

Shadow turned toward Neo, and spoke. "Doom shall be unleashed. Darkness fills the Earth. Your all going to die down here." Lockley, with a glint of fear in his eyes pressed the button. The holograph faded, and the lights in the room, and all over the facility snapped off.

Reaver, Sparks, and the other four surviving ODSTs looked around the room, weapons to bear. The lights on the cryotubes faded from a bright green with the words _Environment Stable_, to a menacing color of red, which read, _Environment Unstable_. Sparks motioned for them all to calm down.

"Relax," she said. "They must have shut down Shadow." The lights slowly flickered back to life all over the Hive. The doors, which were once all locked and shut, opened. The water inside the Viral

Research Room flooded out into the hallways. Soft moans resonated through the hallways.

Lockley quickly went to work on Shadow's mainframe. "That pulse forces the circuit breaker to shut down his mainframe for 30 seconds. After that, if I don't have his primary AI core, he can reboot." He removed the core, and placed it inside the bag. "Let's get back to the others."

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Sparks had her hunting knife drawn, and was trying to pick out a small piece of nail that lodged itself in her figure in boredom.

"They're late," said one of the ODS'Ts. Sparks looked at her mission clock. A clang reverberated throughout the chamber. Sparks sheathed her knife, and pulled out her SMG.

"I'm on it." She said. She walked down the row after row of cryotubes to the source of the sound. A small fusion battery rolled across the floor. Sparks pointed her SMG at the battery, and walked over to it. She peered to the left of a cryotube, and saw a person, a woman, to be exact, in a white lab coat, drenched in water, walking slowly.

Sparks pointed her SMG at the woman, and lowered it. "J.B., we've got a survivor!" Sparks examined the woman. She had black hair, cut short, blue eyes, and her skin was entirely pale. Sparks assumed she was either in shock, or had been in the water for a very long time. Sparks walked over to the woman, and could hear her panting lightly.

"It's okay," Sparks said. "We're here to help." The woman collapsed into Sparks' arms. "You seem to be in some seriousâ€" And she was cut off. The woman bit right into Sparks' right hand. Sparks yelled, and pushed her away. She jumped onto Sparks, and pushed her down to the floor, wanting to bit Sparks.

"Get off of me! Get off of me!" Sparks and the woman continued to grapple on the floor. Keys fell from Sparks' suit, but she didn't have time to grab them. J.B. arrived, with his Battle Rifle pointed at the woman.

"J.B., get her off of me before I stab her ass!" yelled Sparks. J.B. slung his rifle, grabbed the woman off of Sparks, and he shoved her away. The woman was hissing violently.

"Are you okay?" asked J.B., helping Sparks up.

"She bit me man," said Sparks. "She took a chunk clean right out of me!" J.B. pulled out an M6C, and pointed it at the woman, who was getting up.

"Stay down!" yelled J.B. She kept on getting up. "I'm warning you, stay down!"

"She's crazy," said Sparks. The woman got up, and walked over to J.B., she either didn't hear J.B., or didn't care.

"Come any closer, and I'll open fire." The woman kept on walking. "I mean it!" Still walking. J.B. backed up, and fired into the woman's leg. She paused, looked at her leg, and kept walking, hissing even more loudly than before.

J.B., astonished, fired again into the woman's leg. She kept on walking and hissing. J.B. emptied the entire clip into the woman, and Sparks fired her SMG as well. The crazed woman flew backwards into a cryotube, and fell to the floor, motionless.

Sparks and J.B. lowered their weapons. Sparks had a look of disgust on her face. J.B. was still stunned. "I shot her five times," he said. "How was she still standing?"

Sparks pulled out a roll of gauss from her suit, and started patching up her wound.

"Bitch isn't standing now," Sparks said. Reaver walked over to Sparks, and looked at her wound. Lockley, Neo, Kamos, and the other surviving ODSs came running over to J.B., Sparks, and Reaver.

"What was all the shooting?" asked Lockley.

"Did we miss the party?" asked an ODS.

"We found a survivor," said Sparks.

"And you shot them?" asked Lockley, stunned.

"She was crazed," replied Sparks. "She bit me." She showed Lockley the wound. Reaver looked at the keys that were dropped, and slowly walked over to them as the ODSs were talking. J.B. looked over to where the woman fell, and started shouting.

"She's gone! She's gone!"

"Bullshit!" yelled Sparks.

"She fell right here," said J.B., pointing. "But she's gone!" Neo walked over to the spot J.B. was pointing.

"Interesting!" said Neo. "There's some blood, but not much."

Reaver walked over to the spot Neo was at. "It looks coagulated." He said.

"Yeah, it does."

"That's impossible."

"Why not!" yelled J.B.

Reaver, who was crouching, picked up the keys while no one was looking, and stood up. "Because blood doesn't do that till after your dead," he responded.

"Can we go now?" asked an impatient Kamos.

Sparks put her glove and helmet back on. "We're not going anywhere

till the rest of the team gets here." Lockley stuttered, and Neo looked away.

"There's no one else coming."

"What the fuck are you talking about!" shouted Sparks.

J.B. got up, and put a hand on Sparks' shoulder. "Wait. Do you hear that?" Everyone paused. Neo, and the ODSs drew their weapons.

"Quiet." Everyone heard the sound. It sounded like something metal being dragged against the floor. A man walked out, his ankle twisted in an odd way. He had an ax in his right hand being dragged on the floor. He looked up at the ODSs. Half his face was missing. The man hissed violently, and walked towards the ODSs.

Behind him, dozens of other people in white lab coats, and in working clothes with various wounds and injuries growled and walked towards the ODSs. Sparks hesitated, but kept her SMG drawn. More and more workers came walking towards the ODSs in all directions. Everyone kept his or her weapons at ready.

"Don't come any closer!" shouted an ODS.

"They're behind us!" shouted another.

"Jesus," said Lockley, his pistol drawn. Reaver stood as far away from the oncoming people as possible, and started to work the keys into the handcuffs. Kamos didn't look surprised, or frightened at all.

"They're everywhere!" exclaimed Neo. The woman who attacked Sparks earlier jumped out of nowhere, and attacked Sparks. Sparks, with a look of complete disgust on her face, put a hand on the woman's head, and broke her neck. The woman crumpled lifelessly to the floor.

Sparks holstered her SMG, and unslung her Battle Rifle. She aimed it at the man with the ax, which was coming closer and closer, and fired a three-round burst into the man's chest. He fell to the floor. J.B. unslung his Battle Rifle too, and fired three three-round bursts into the oncoming mass. The man with the ax dropped the ax, and got up on his feet again. Sparks aimed her rifle at him, once more, and put him down for good.

Lockley was hesitating. "I said stay back!" he shouted at a man coming towards him. He, like the woman before, ignored him, and kept on coming. Lockley fired a round into the man's chest. He recoiled backwards, but kept coming. Lockley fired at the head, and the man dropped.

A scream penetrated the air, and one of the ODSs dropped the ground. Three of the workers had pinned him to the ground, and wereâ€|they were _eating _the ODS alive. Neo yelled, and fired three rounds at each worker. They kept on eating the ODS. Neo reloaded, and hit one of the workers on the head with his pistol. The worker dropped.

Neo fired a round in the head at another, and kicked the woman who was still eating the ODS in the crouch. She hissed angrily, and rose to her feet. Neo fired three rounds at her heart, and she fell back, got up, and kept on walking. Neo fired three more rounds at her head,

and she fell to the ground. The O DST was clearly dead. Neo holstered his pistol, and relieved the worker of his battle rifle.

"Why aren't they dying!" shouted J.B., as he fired another burst. One of the O DSTs fired into the cryotubes, and subzero gases jetted out of the tube.

"Watch it!" shouted Neo. The O DSTs collected fire still kept on hitting the tube, and more and more gases streamed out from it. Workers dropped, got up, and repeated the process as they were literally riddled with bullets. A warning light activated on the tube, and a small alarm sounded.

"Let's go!" shouted J.B. And the O DSTs, Reaver, Neo, and Kamos started their retreat. The workers, which Neo couldn't help but notice, no matter how intimidating they were, and dangerous, walked towards them, and motioned like a retard. Reaver managed to get the keys inside of the handcuff, and twisted. Nothing. It was a wrong key. He was about to switch for another key, when Neo grabbed Reaver by the shoulder, and ran with him.

The cryotube exploded, and a dozen workers fell to the ground. A few of them caught on fire. Reaver dropped to the ground, and the keys flew from his hands. He crawled over to the keys, and tried to undo the cuffs. A worker who was on fire was pursuing Reaver. The worker didn't seem to notice the pain.

Reaver got the keys into his hands, but the worker got to his feet, and started clawing for him. Reaver kicked the worker in the face, and he was motionless. Reaver managed to get the right key inside the handcuff, twisted, and the handcuffs dropped the floor.

Sparks jumped onto a cryotube platform, and hosed the oncoming workers with bullets. She kept on firing until she heard a sharp _click_ when she pulled the trigger. She looked at her ammo counter, which read _00_. _She muttered a curse, dropped the rifle, and pulled out both her SMGs. She fired and fired at the workers, and they fell like flies.

Lockley and J.B. were at a different portion of the room, and were putting up a fierce fight. "We lost the others!" shouted Lockley.

"Keep moving!" J.B. shouted back, as he fired at the workers. J.B. and Lockley made a mad dash for the exit, where Kamos was standing.

"You waited?" asked Lockley.

"Didn't know the code," responded Kamos, keeping his cool. Lockley typed in furiously into the keypad that was next to the door.

"Come onâ€|Come on." A beep was heard, and the lights flashed red. "Shit!" Lockley typed faster than ever into the pad.

"Come on." Said Kamos. A beep.

"Shit!" Another beep. "Shit!" J.B. downed a worker, and turned to Lockley.

"What's taking so long!" he yelled.

"I'm trying!" shouted back Lockley.

Reaver, even though he had the handcuffs off, was still stuck in his hiding spot as three workers clawed for him. Neo ran in, fired at each worker, and dropped them. Reaver accidentally kicked one of the cryotubes, and gases fumed out.

"Come on," said Neo.

J.B. had had enough, and pushed Lockley out of the way. "What's the code?" he asked.

"Hurry up!" yelled Sparks. "I'm running out of ammo!"

Lockley was stuttering as a worker slowly walked towards him. "Zero, four, three, twoâ€"No! Five!" He fired at the worker, who dropped.

"What?" asked J.B.

"Zero, four, threeâ€" Kamos had had enough as well. He walked up to Lockley, and asked again in his face. "What is the code?"

"Zero! Four Three! One! Nine! Six! Five!" yelled Lockley, as the other ODSTs covered him as he was yelling.

"Got it?" asked Kamos.

"Yeah," said J.B. "See how easy that was." And the door hissed open. Immediately, hundreds of hands were grabbing at J.B.

"J.B.!"

"Shit!"

Sparks turned both SMGs at the workers, but there were hundreds of them. She lowered her SMGs. "Grab my hand!" The last words J.B. said were drowned out, and he was swamped by the human tide. The workers started biting into him, and J.B. was screaming.

One of the workers bit into Sparks, and she screamed as well. It took Kamos and Lockley to pull Sparks away. The other surviving ODSTs with them suffered a similar fate, and were being eaten. Lockley punched one of the workers in the face, and kicked another, while Kamos dragged Sparks, who was still screaming, away.

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A bang resounded through out the cryo chamber, as its occupant blew one of the cryotube doors away. A snarling, red, and large monster jumped out of the tube.

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Neo, with his Battle Rifle at hand, and Reaver, who had Neo's M6C, were walking through the rows of tubes. The workers were nowhere near the two of them, and this worried Neo. Neo kept on walking, and

turned around to check on Reaver. Nothing. He wasn't there.

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Lockley, Kamos, and Sparks had retreated back into Shadow's chamber.

"Where are the bodies?" asked Lockley, pointing towards Shadow's chamber. "Where did they go!"

"Fuck!"

"Whatever they are," said Sparks, as the workers were pounding on the doors. "There's too many of them out there."

"Whatever they are?" asked a nervous Lockley. "It's pretty obvious what they are. Lab coats, badges—those people used to work here!"

Sparks walked up to Lockley, and slapped him in the face. "All the people working here are dead."

"Well," said Kamos. "That isn't stopping them from walking around."

"Well, where did they come from? Why didn't we see them on the way in? Huh!"

Sparks was irritated by now. "When you cut the power, you unlocked the doors. _You _let them out."

Lockley paused, and turned towards Sparks. She looked at her SMGs, and checked the ammo, and then slammed them on the floor.

Lockley broke the silence. "We're never going to make it to the surface."

-

Neo had wandered out of the cryo room, and into what was the Viral Research Room. Papers littered the floor, and cages, which once held specimens, were opened, and holes were torn in the center. Holes large enough for something to jump out of them. Blood splattered the cages and walls.

Neo, with his rifle pointing cautiously at the only other entrance in the room, slowly crept towards it. He opened the door, and made sure the room was clear. It was. More cages littered the room, and they too, had large holes in them. There was another room across from Neo, which had once held many experiments, but now they, and the walls were coated in layers of blood.

Neo walked towards the room, until he heard a loud metallic _screech_. Neo spun around, crouched, with his rifle at ready; letting his old military training kick in. Neo listened carefully.

_Pitter-patter, pitter-patter, _was what he heard. Shadow on shadow, and a big, black, dog entered the room. Its fur was coated in thick

red mats, and parts of its skin were torn away, revealing the organs inside. Neo felt a wave of fear overtake him. The dog charged right at Neo, who instead of firing at the dog, had run into the other chamber, and locked the latch. The dog was on its hind legs, and clawing at the door.

Neo turned around and sighed, but was quickly shot into action. A security guard hissed, and grabbed Neo by the neck. Neo pushed the guard away, and punched him rapidly in the chest. The man still stood there, and appeared unharmed.

Neo jumped up, and kicked the guard in the head, which flew back and crashed into a wall, and right into all the glasses filled with chemicals. The guard slumped the ground, dead. Neo walked over to the corpse, and relieved the officer of his M6C. Just as he pulled it out, the dog that had tried to get in earlier, had jumped through the window, and shattered the glass, and immediately charged after him.

Neo sprung into action, and ran through another blast door, and slammed it shut, and locked it. The dog jumped up, and scratched away at the door. Neo turned, and was met by seven dogs. Neo immediately brought his pistol to bear, and emptied the entire clip at the dogs. They all fell to the floor dead. Neo ejected the clip, and replaced it with one of his spare magazines.

One was left however, the one that Neo tried to escape from. It jumped at Neo, and Neo, who had little time to act, hit the dog squarely in between the eyes with the pistol. The dog fell to the floor, twitched twice, and died.

-

Reaver took a deep breath. There wasn't much time. He filtered through the papers of one of the former workers, looking for something. The holographic projects flickered in the background. As Reaver was looking through the papers, one of the workers jumped up onto the glass, and slammed his fist repeatedly into it. The glass held, and after some time, the man went away.

Reaver sighed, and continued looking through the papers. Reaver heard movement, and spun around, M6C aimed at the source. It was a blonde girl, in her twenties, with green eyes. Her face was pale, and she was panting softly. Reaver lowered his gun.

The woman walked over to Reaver, and put a hand on his cheek. Reaver smiled, but the woman growled, and tried to bite Reaver. She tried to bite his neck, but Reaver kept her off. _Thunk!_ And the woman dropped off Reaver, dead. Neo checked his pistol to make sure it was undamaged as he used it as a blunt weapon. It was fine.

Reaver was crying, as he held the body of the woman.

"Who was she?" asked Neo.

"My fiancÃe," replied Reaver, weakly. Neo got up and looked around the room for an exit, but Reaver spoke again. "Corporations, like Umbrellaâ€|They think they are above the law," Reaver looked up at Neo, and met his eyes. "But they're not. There are millions of us who think the same, all over the UNSC. Some of us provide us with

information, while others give support. Some take more direct action."

"Like you," said Neo.

"Yes," replied Reaver. "If your employers, and the ODSTs were a little more thorough, they would have seen right through my false I.D. I'm Reaver, all right, but I'm not a security operative. You know how long I've been working for Umbrella?"

Neo nodded his head negatively.

"About a week," said Reaver. "But there is no way I could have infiltrated the Hive, not directly at least."

"So you sentâ€¦|you sent her?" asked Neo.

"Yes. I had to be lookout for her, and be able to pick up light amounts of information, or fingerprints, anything that would help her out." Reaver looked down. "We needed something concrete, something that we could expose Umbrella to the entire Human race. Yes, they helped us in the Covenant war, but that was simply another day's profit. Now that the war's over, they can engineer a false one, with all theseâ€¦|these zombies.

"These zombies are the result of genetic research, _illegal_ genetic research, and that was gained from the Covenant War. My fiancÃ©e was going to smuggle out a piece of the T-Virus, that's the virus they were developing, and she would hand it off to me, and we'd give it to our organization. Do you realize just how much the T-Virus would be worth on the open market?"

"No. But may I ask you a different question?" asked Neo.

"Sure."

"Where did you receive your security training?"

Reaver grinned. "I was in the Covenant War. I saw first hand what was going on. I was on Alpha Halo, back during the Reclaimer Campaign. They used some kind of viral weapon on our platoon, and it turns out it was the T-Virus. I then realized the threat Umbrella posed to the UNSC, and that's when I joined up with my current organization."

Something moved, and Neo thought he heard some moans. "We better get moving."

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Neo and Reaver made a mad dash for the door, and opened it. Sparks pointed her M6C at the door. "Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" shouted Neo. "It's us." Reaver closed and locked the door behind him, crushing one of the zombies' hands, and it fell to the floor. Sparks looked at it with disgust, and holstered her pistol. The zombies started pounding on the door, but Neo knew there was no way they'd penetrate the thick armor.

"Right behind usâ€¦|" muttered Neo, and he walked to the other door of

the chamber. "What about this door?"

"They're waiting out there too," said Lockley.

"And that way?" asked Neo, pointing towards Shadow's Chamber.

"It's a dead end," said Lockley, "there's no way out of there."

"So we wait," said Kamos. "If someone doesn't hear from you, they'll send backup, or something, right?" Sparks looked at Lockley, and he looked back at her, uncertainly.

"What?" asked Kamos. "What's wrong?"

"You know those blast doors we passed?" asked Sparks. "They seal shut in a matter of hours. If we're not out of there then, we're not getting out."

"What! What are you talking about, they can't just bury us alive down here!"

Bang. Slam. "Containing the incident is the only fail-safe plan that they hadâ€|against possible contamination.

"We have to find a way out of here," said Neo. Neo glanced at Sparks, and walked over to where the bag from earlier was.

"What are you doing?" asked Sparks. Neo grabbed the bag, and walked towards Shadow's Chamber. Lockley chased after him.

"Where are you taking those?" Lockley asked.

"I'm going to turn him back on."

"I don't think that's a good idea," said Lockley.

"You have a better plan?" Asked Neo, as he pulled out the AI core.

"That bastard," said Sparks. "That bastard killed my team."

"That bastard might be our only way out of here," said Neo, as he put the AI core into the mainframe. Neo rebooted the AI mainframe, and the menacing holograph of Shadow reappeared.

Lockley turned to Neo. "Alright, this time, if he doesn't cooperate, I can remote activate the EMP generator, and he'll fry."

"Ah, your back," said Shadow. "I gather that things have gone out of your control, yes?"

"Give me that fucking switch!" yelled Sparks, as she tackled Lockley, fighting for the remote. Neo pulled Sparks off, and Reaver restrained her.

"I warned you, but you didn't listen. You should keep your ears open now."

"What's going on down here?" asked an irritated Sparks.

"Research and development," said Shadow, his red eyes blazing.

"What about the T-Virus?" asked Reaver.

"The T-Virus," said Shadow, "was a major medical breakthrough, and from information taken during the Covenant War, obviously possessed highly profitable, and useable, military applications."

"Well how does it explain those things out there?" asked Lockley.

"Even in death, the human body still remains active. Hair and fingernails continue to grow, new cells are produced, and the brain itself holds a small electrical charge that takes months to dissipate.

"The T-Virus provides a massive jolt both to cellular growth, and to those small electrical impulses. Simply, it reanimates the body, and can bring the dead back to life; but not fully, however. The subjects have the simplest motor functions, little memory, and virtually no intelligence. And finally, they have the most powerful need of all, the need to feed."

"How do you kill them?" asked Sparks, who found herself growing more and more angry.

"Simply by severing the top of the spinal cord, or by dealing massive trauma to the brain are the most effective methods."

"Why did you kill everybody down here?" asked an equally angry Reaver.

"The T-Virus escaped into the air conditioning system of the Hive, and an uncontrollable pattern of infection began. For you see, the T-Virus is protean, changing from liquid, to airborne to blood transmission, but it depends on the environment. The virus is almost impossible to kill. I couldn't allow it to escape into the Hive.

"My satellite reports indicate that something similar has happened to the other Hives around the world, and the AIs have taken similar actions. For you must understand, if anyone becomes infected, they must _not _be allowed to leave the Hive."

"Whoa," said Kamos. "We're not infected."

"One bite, one scratch from an infected subject is sufficient to transmit the virus, and then you become one of them. A check of my systems indicates that my Reedman cycling-thought matrix failsafe has been activated. May I ask why?"

"Insurance," said Neo. "We need a way out of here. If you refuse to help at anytime, we activate the failsafe. Understand?"

"Yes," replied Shadow. "There is an entrance to the tunnels below this level that will allow you out, it is over there." And he pointed. Neo removed the hatch to the tunnels, and entered the abyss, his pistol pointed into the darkness.

****Resident Halo****

Chapter Three

Earth Calendar January 25, 2553.

>New Mombassa, Earth.
Umbrella Corporation Secret Underground Research Facility "The Hive".

Neo with his pistol drawn, activated a handheld flashlight, and with a strip of adhesive, attached it to his M6C. He swept the area of darkness to make sure it was clear, and listened carefully. No moans, no figures, no bodies; it was clear. He helped Reaver, Kamos, Sparks, and Lockley get down into the tunnels.

"You'd think with an underground facility you'd need _more_ underground tunnelsâ€|" muttered Reaver. Neo lifted a finger to his lips to silence him. Sparks looked at her watch.

"We need to move. This is a big base, and we don't know how long it will take to get back up top," she said. Neo nodded, and led the way. As he walked further into the tunnels, he wondered about Sparks: it had been a while since she was bit, and Neo wondered how long it would take the Virus to affect her. Neo shrugged, unless they found an anti-virus or something, they'd have to deal with her eventually. Neo slowed his pace till he was alongside Reaver, and let Lockley lead the way.

"Since you seem to know so much about the Virus, do you know where an anti-virus would be?" asked Neo.

"Why?" asked Reaver. "My fiancÃ©e is dead, and I don't think I'll need it for anyone else."

Neo pointed to Sparks. "That's why."

Reaver slapped his forehead. "Of course," he said. "I forgot she was infected. If we have enough time, I'll try to get the Anti-Virus." Neo grinned. _Good_, he thought. _I might be able to save myself some ammo_. A soft moan filled the silence of the tunnels, and the whole group stopped, weapons drawn. Neo examined his surroundings. The tunnel kept on going for what seemed like forever, and there were a few ducts on the side of the tunnels andâ€|" Neo paused. He thought he saw some shadows moving in the ducts.

"Lockley!" Neo shouted, aiming his M6C at the duct. "Watch out!" Lockley turned towards Neo with a look of confusion when dozens of hands reached out from the duct and grabbed Lockley.

"Lockley!" shouted Reaver, Kamos, and Sparks, and the three tried to push away the hands that were sticking out from the duct. There was too many, and Lockley was dragged up into the vent, screaming. The remote dropped from his suit, and Neo grabbed it.

"Come on!" yelled Neo. "He's a goner, we need to get out of here!" Sparks hesitated, but Kamos, who was holding Sparks, dragged her with him as he ran. Reaver and Neo chased after Kamos, ignoring the dozens of zombies popping out of nowhere. The three kept running and running until they reached a door that lead upwards.

Neo ran ahead of the group, and kicked the hatch open, and rolled out, pistol ready. Nothing. Sparks, Reaver, and Kamos jumped up, and Neo slammed the hatch shut, and locked it. The zombies moaned angrily and slammed on the hatch. Neo examined his surroundings once more. It looked like a research room, with all the chemicals, computers, and cameras in the room.

"Ah," said a voice. Neo aimed his pistol at the source. "I see your still aliveâ€|Well, most of you."

"Shadow," said Sparks.

"Yes," Shadow said from the loudspeakers installed in the room. His figure appeared on a miniaturized projection platform. His red eyes glared at Sparks menacingly. "You are in the Viral Research Room. This is where the T-Virus was kept, and the incident was released." Neo looked around once more, and noticed the bodies of the dogs. He grinned; he knew he had been in here before.

"What!" shouted Reaver. "Then if the virus is hereâ€|" and he ran to another chamber of the room, searching.

"You are almost out of this facility, but you are about to meet the most deadly of creatures in this facility," said Shadow. His dark wings were extended from his robe, and he hovered off the platform by an inch. "I can stop the creature, but there is one condition."

"What?" asked Reaver, coming back into the chamber.

"One of your group has been infected," said Shadow. "I can't allow her to leave. Kill her, and I'll let you all leave."

"Give us a moment," said Neo.

"Of course," responded Shadow, and he disappeared. Neo looked around the room, the anti-virus had to be here.

There was a small chamber a few dozen meters away from Neo, but it was in another section of the room, a section where the water hadn't finished clearing out; which was waist deep now. Neo jumped into the water, and waded over to the chamber. A small viral containment chamber, with holes for to stick gloved hands was in it. Neo peered inside the chamber. Nothing. Neo cursed, and continued searching.

Shadow's hologram flashed to life, and he spoke. "If your looking for the anti-virus, it isn't here," Shadow said.

"How do you know?" asked Neo.

"My sensors do not indicate the anti-virus, it must have been taking away earlier when the incident was released." And as Shadow finished his sentence, Kamos pulled out an M6D pistol. It was different from Neo's that it fired stronger bullets, and had a small scope attached.

"Your right," Kamos said. Neo's hand motioned for his pistol; Kamos aimed his pistol at Neo. "Don't even try it. You maybe a former crack Marine, but you won't be able to dodge bullets." Kamos grinned.

"Yeah, I released the T-virus. Caused all this." He motioned all around him with his free hand.

"Why!" demanded Reaver.

"Because," said Kamos. "I'm part of The Organization, just like you. Your methods weren't enough. The press wouldn't believe it if you gave them a sample of the virus. So me, and the others, we decided to do the most direct action possible. Right now, the other two Hives are suffering similar outbreaks. Umbrella will have to take direct action, and the UNSC will bring them down."

"Why were you still here then?" asked Neo. "Why were you on the train?"

Kamos' face was flushed with anger. "This bastard here detected me before I could get out, and gassed me on the train. But it doesn't matter. Soon, I'll be out of here, and the only other witnesses of this will all be dead. Consider yourself fired, Reaver."

"Where," stammered Sparks. "Isâ€|Theâ€|Antivirus?" Sparks felt the life, and will, drain out of here.

"On the train," said Kamos. "With a few samples of the T-virus, just incase." And Kamos exited the room, through the only other exit, and a flash of gunfire sparked outside the room. Reaver ran up to the door.

"Dammit!" he shouted. "He shot the locking mechanism out. I can't believe he's going to get away with this!"

"I don't think so," said Shadow. Reaver turned around in surprise. "What? Forget about me already? He's about to get some company."

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Kamos walked out of the main Hive entrance, a look of victory and triumph on his face. He was about to climb onto the train, and unlock the doors whenâ€|movement caught his eyes. He turned, and aimed at the source with his M6D.

A massive brown-red creature that looked like a cross between a giant human and a dog leapt down from the ceiling, and with its massive claws, sliced open Kamos' chest. Kamos screamed, and fired the entire magazine into the creature. It recoiled, but bit Kamos in the chest. Kamos screamed again, and fell to the ground, blood oozing out of his chest.

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"Did we really need to see that?" asked Reaver, looking away from the view screen on the wall.

"What the fuck is that?" asked Neo.

"It was one of our earlier experiments," said Shadow, sounding pleased. "Produced by injecting live Flood cells, and the T-virus directly into living tissue. The results were unstableâ€| Now that this creature, codenamed 'Licker' by the Hive, has fed on fresh DNA, it will mutate into a stronger, faster being."

"Great," muttered Sparks.

"If you knew it was loose," said Reaver. "Then why didn't you warn us?"

Neo glared at Shadow's hologram. "Because," he said, "he was saving it for us. Right?"

Shadow laughed. "'You are a smart human indeed. If you weren't going to die, I might respect you. I didn't think any of you would make it this far. Not alive that is."

"Why didn't you mention the anti-virus to us earlier?" asked an angry Sparks.

"Because, after being infected this long, I didn't think that the process could be reversed."

"But it can, right?"

"I don't deal in chances."

Sparks pulled out her pistol, and aimed it at the glass window, that was riddled with ax marks. "Fuck it," she said, and she fell to her knees, and glanced at her watch, which read less than 20 minutes. Reaver ran up to the door, and typed away rapidly on the keypad.

"You require the access code," said Shadow. "I will give it to you, but I still cannot let this woman leave here. The chances the anti-virus will work are small, and I am not allowed to take that chance. Kill her, and I'll give you the code."

Sparks tossed Neo her pistol. "She's right. You're going to have to kill me."

"No," said Neo.

"Otherwise we all die!" Shouted Sparks. The Licker, blood still fresh on his hands, walked up to the weakened window, and started ramming it with his face.

"The glass is still strong, but it won't last forever," said Shadow.

"Kill me!"

"No!"

"You have no choice."

And these three lines were shouted over and over, as the Licker pounded into the glass. Neo aimed his pistol at Sparks, then at Shadow's hologram projector, and fired three rounds into it. The hologram flickered twice, and died. Reaver grabbed the remote that Neo had, and slammed the button down. The power in the facility died, and the lights shut off.

The three looked up to the window, as the ramming sound stopped; the

Licker was gone. Reaver opened the door, and the Licker had rammed the window once more. "Move!" shouted Neo, raising Spark's pistol, and pulling out his own.

Reaver grabbed Sparks, and got out of the room, Neo close behind. The Licker penetrated the glass, and roared. Neo closed the door, and locked it. The Licker jammed its claws into the door, and attempted to smash his way through.

"Let's get out of here!" shouted Neo. And the three ran.

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After a short sprint, the group arrived at the train. Blood decorated the wall next to the train, as Kamos' mangled body lay on the ground, next to the case with the anti-virus. Reaver entered the train, and placed Sparks body on the ground, stepping over Kamos' corpse. Neo reached over to pick the case up, but Kamos' eyes opened, and he reached out, trying to claw Neo. Neo backed off in surprise, but leveled his pistol at Kamos head, and pulled the trigger. Neo stepped over his corpse, and took the silver case, and walked onto the train, and sealed the doors shut.

The train sputtered to life, and moved. Neo opened the case, and pulled out an injector, and loaded up the green anti-virus. He injected it into Sparks' neck, and she fell asleep. Neo gasped, and slowly, in surprise, reached out for the M6C pistol, that he had deposited next to the case. He hesitated, and put a finger around the trigger, but Sparks grabbed for it suddenly.

"I'm not dead yet," she said. Reaver, who was watching the two, grinned, and suddenly, large claws ripped off the part of the train he was standing next to. He rolled to the left, and pulled out his pistol. Neo aimed his pistol at the Licker, who was jumping from side to side on the train, ripping off pieces of armor. Reaver jumped back into the compartment that Neo was in, and slammed the meter thick door shut.

The Licker, which resembled a dog, more than a man now, ripped off the roof of the car, and jumped down. Neo pulled out an SMG as well, and fired from both guns. The bullets penetrated the head, but the Licker seemed more irritated than hurt. The Licker extended his two-meter long tongue, and grabbed Neo's leg.

Reaver ran to the back of the train, and pulled open the cargo doors, which dropped open, and the Licker, tongue still attached to Neo, fell down. Neo pulled out a small hunting knife, and stuck the Licker's leg into the armor of the train, and scrambled away. The Licker caught on fire from the friction of being dragged at rapid speed, and it's corpse dropped away on the tracks.

Reaver heaved a sigh of relief, but was quickly grabbed around the neck by Sparks. Reaver put an arm around Sparks', but was bit. Reaver yelped a scream, and back-kicked Sparks away. Her face was pale now, and her eyes had turned bright blue. She hissed. Neo pulled up his hunting knife from the train, and threw it at Sparks. It hit her squarely on the head, and she fell back, dead.

Neo dropped to the ground, and sighed. Reaver ripped off a piece of his shirt, and tied it around the wound, and pulled out a fresh

injector from the case, and injected himself with the anti-virus. "I hope this works," he said. "Because it sure didn't work for her."

Neo smiled grimly. "She had been exposed for hours. You've been exposed for minutes. It might work."

"I hope so," said Reaver. "Because I plan on having kids sometime." Neo laughed. The train came to a halt, and Neo and Reaver, with the case in hand, walked off the train. They ran the stairs, which lead up to the mansion.

The timer on the walls clicked off numbers: 14, 13, 12... Neo and Reaver made it up the stairs, and inside the mansion as the numbers reached 0. Twenty-meter thick blast doors descended down, and sealed the Hive entrance from the rest of the world.

The two had just walked ten feet when dozens of guns whirled and were pointed at the two. A man in white ODSST encounter armor approached the two. "I'm General Ackerson of the UNSC Special Forces, you two are now under arrest."

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The two were taken outside the mansion, where dozens of Warthogs with the Umbrella Corporation logo waited. A man in a black suit walked up to Ackerson. "We'll take over from here, General." Ackerson nodded, and walked away.

The man walked up to the two. "Well, well. I see two of our employees made it out. I assume the ODSSTs were killed?" he asked; Neo, his face contorted in anger, managed to nod. "I see. A tragedy." The man gestured for another man in a sharp black suit, and he nodded, and walked inside the mansion, dozens of armed men following him.

The man in the suit, with Neo and Reaver in tow, walked over to a Warthog -its primary weapon removed-; a man in a type of armor that Neo had never seen was in the driver seat. The suited man got in the passenger seat, while Reaver and Neo got in the back seats. The Warthog's engine sputtered to life, and the car drove off, away from the mansion.

"Where are we going?" asked Neo. The suited man grinned.

"Why, you're going to Boot Camp, of course."

5. Johnson and the Squad

****Resident Halo****

Chapter Four

Earth Calendar January 26, 2553.

>New Mombassa, Earth.
Umbrella Corporation Training Facility;
Located on the Outskirts of New Mombassa.

Neo and Reaver were quickly assigned a bunk as soon as they entered the camp. Both still were baffled as to why Umbrella brought them here from the Hive. Dozens of men in Marine green with the Umbrella

Corporation symbol on their uniforms, walked around the camp.

Reaver and Neo went to their bunk, and had just sat down, and inspected the room when a man with Lance-Corporal brevets entered the room, and handed Neo a slip of paper. He saluted smartly, came to, and left the room, closing the door behind him. Neo scanned it, placed it on his bed, and turned to Reaver.

"It's our drill instructor assignments, we're to report to him immediately," and Neo turned to leave. Reaver grabbed Neo by the arm, and spun him around.

"Why?" asked Reaver. "They're still our enemies. Why go?"

Neo grinned. "Because they have the guns, and we might be able to get out of here."

Reaver grinned as well. "Good point." The two walked out of the room, and smartly jogged up to the Parade Grounds. They got into the first row of a long line of recruits, who were standing nervously at attention. A black man with Sergeant Major pips paced back and forth in front of the recruits. He pulled out a cigar from his uniform vest, and lit it.

"This is the most pathetic bunch of slime I have ever seen!" he shouted. He took a puff of his cigar. "Why, I'll bet if half of you were in the Covenant War, you'd come home to your mommas cryin'!" Neo grinned the man reminded him of his first basic instructor.

The man noticed it at once, and walked up to Neo, breathed out the smoke in his face, and yelled. "You think I'm funny, boy? Speak up." Neo replied sharply.

'Sir! No, sir!'

"What's funny then, boy? Do you respect Sergeant Avery Johnson?"

Neo didn't phase. "Yes, sir! It's just, sir, I was in the Covenant War, sir."

Johnson took another puff of the cigar, and grinned. "What unit?"

"Tenth Marine, sir." Neo said. "I was in the Alpha Halo campaign with the Spartans. So was my friend here." He indicated Reaver with a turn of his head.

"Marine, huh! You know a Spartan named Master Chief? Spartan-117?"

Neo paused, furrowed his brow, and responded. "Yes, sir. I do recall him."

Johnson laughed. "Well now, if you fought with the Chief, your ok in my book. I was at Alpha Halo too, son."

Johnson turned to the other recruits and shouted at the top of his lungs. "Well now, we have some real men here! Anyone else in the

War?" No one budged. "Well then, I bet you're a bunch of overgrown sissies, gimme five laps around the grounds, now!" The recruits groaned. "

What? You're crying already? Not good enough, ten laps, and get moving!" He signaled for other instructors, who whipped into action, and started hitting some of the recruits with shock rods. "Move it!" The recruits didn't groan, and immediately in a disorganized fashion, started jogging. Johnson stood at the back of the line yelling, but motioned for Reaver and Neo to stay. "My room is here," he pulled out a sheet of paper and handed it to Neo. "I'll see to it that you two are bumped up to squad leaders."

Johnson grinned, but turned, and immediately starting chasing after the recruits, yelling expletives as they ran.

Neo and Reaver looked at each other, grinned, and walked back to their room.

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Two hours later, the same Lance Corporal from earlier knocked on their door. "Follow me, please," he said, and Neo and Reaver did so. The two were taken to a different part of the training grounds to the officer's quarters. The Corporal stopped at one particular room, with the letters A. J. Johnson inscribed into the door. The Corporal knocked twice on the door, and left.

A few moments later, Johnson still in his Marine armor, and sporting a UNSCMC hat opened the door. "Ah, it's the vets. Come in," Johnson said. Neo and Reaver entered his room. Neo looked around. The room was much larger than theirs, and had dozens of military citations and medals framed on the walls.

There was even a picture of Johnson standing in dress uniform next to a green armored figure, with a blue AI standing next to him on a small pedestal. Behind them in the background were dozens of Orbital MAC Guns, and hundreds of UNSC ships over Earth. Neo walked up to the picture curiously, and picked it up.

>"When was this taken?" asked Neo. Johnson grinned. <p>

"After I came back from Halo, there was an award ceremony for our actions at Halo; on the MAC gun Cairo. This was right before the Covenant invasion of Earth, near the end of the war."

"You were at Halo? The first Halo?" asked a dumbstruck Reaver.

"Yeah," said Johnson, taking his cap off. "I was assigned to the Pillar of Autumn with Captain Keyes on some wild classified mission. We found the first Halo, and blew it up. Only me and the Chief survived."

Neo looked on Johnson with awe. "I didn't think anyone survived that, except the Chief."

Johnson grinned at Neo. "That's what you get for thinkin'."

Neo grinned back. "So if you're such a decorated hero, what are you doing here in New Mombassa?"

Johnson frowned now; the first time Neo saw the black man do so. "After the war, the UNSC didn't need vets anymore, most of us got discharged."

Reaver and Neo both frowned, they knew too. "But Umbrella came to me with an offer, they'd let me be drill instructor, and play sergeant again. I figured, free grub and a room, why not?"

Johnson frowned again. "I just joined up about a week ago, and already I'm hearing rumors. Is it true you two came from the Hive?"

Neo and Reaver nodded gravely.

Johnson's eyebrows lifted up. "What happened? I heard something about Shadow going homicidal, but that's it." And so for the next half hour, Neo and Reaver told a recounting of their tales, not omitting anything: Johnson seemed trustable.

Johnson had taken a chair at his desk, and slumped back into it. He let out a laugh. "That's quite a tale," he said. He pulled out a box of cigars and offered one to Neo and Reaver. Neo accepted, but Reaver was dumbfounded.

"But itsâ€"

"I'm sure it's true, and I believe you." Johnson pulled out a lighter, and lit his cigar; he did the same for Neo.

"I'm sure you didn't call us here to reminisce about old times," Neo said, taking a puff of his cigar.

"For a marine, you sure got a big vocabulary," Johnson grinned and Neo shrugged. "Partially. I managed to talk to the brass, and you," he points to Neo, "a squad. Reaver here is your XO. You get two separate rooms right here in officers' country." Johnson looked at the clock on his wall. "Well, it's getting' late. I guess I'll see you both at the mess hall." Neo and Reaver nodded, said their goodbyes, and went to find their new rooms.

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The next day, Neo got up out of his soft bed as reveille was called. Neo groaned, made his bed, and found a sheaf of paper under his door. It was the listing for those who would be in his squad, their background information, and the usual.

Neo looked at the list, and read the background info on each person.

****ODST Special Forces Squad Alpha****

>Commander: Captain Charles "Neo" O'Neil, Ex-UNSC Marine

>2nd In Command: Lieutenant Niles "Reaver" Roberto, Ex-UNSC Marine

>Alpha Team
Sergeant Avery "A.J." Johnson, _Ex-UNSC Marine_

>Corporal Carl "Chaos" Phregos, Sniper

>Private Ryan "Ramos" Reader, Heavy weapons specialist

>Private Charlotte "Pica" Dennings, Sniper
>Beta Team
Sergeant Gregory "Snake" Talos, _ Ex-ODST_
>Corporal Neil "Navy" Newcamp
Private Keith Neilson
>Private Robert "Rogue" Hammings
Delta Team |

The list went on for another page, detailing special notes, medals, commendations from earlier training, and other officer mumbo-jumbo. Neo scanned the list; all and all, there were three-dozen men in his "squad". There was also a schedule for training. Neo looked at the clock, and the time on the schedule, and rushed into his uniform. He was to be at the parade grounds in five minutes.

As Neo was scrambling into his new officer's uniform, he noticed the irony that these were Umbrella Corporation men, and he was _willingly_ training a squad for their use. Neo shrugged. While they maybe his enemies, it was good to play officer once again.

Neo finished buttoning his collar, and ran out the room, slamming the door. Neo ran as fast as he could to the parade grounds, and almost knocked over a young Private as he was jogging. Neo quickly apologized, saluted, and ran to the parade grounds. Thirty-six men and women stood at full attention, divided into four lines of nine, with Reaver standing at the front of the lines.

Reaver, however, stood at ease, and waited for Neo to jog over to his side. Neo slowed down, and marched next to Reaver. Sergeant Johnson grinned from his place in the line, Reaver didn't look as thrilled. Neo stood at ease too, and called for the squad to do the same.

"As you may or may not know," Neo shouted, trying to overcome the din of the parade grounds. Above, Pelicans flew to and fro, and the city of New Mombassa, being rebuilt, could be seen in the distance. "I am Captain O'Neil, your new CO. Most of my friends call me Neo, and I'm fine if you call me by that; but at all times you will address me as SIR! Do you get me!"

The men and women all shouted simultaneously, "Sir, yes, sir!". Neo was about to make a speech when an alarm sounded throughout the camp.

A male voice sounded on the intercom: _Action stations, action stations._ The camp burst into action, and panic. Neo, without further commands, ran off with Reaver to the command dome.

"What's happening?" asked Neo. General Ackerson stood over a functionary, as he the lower ranking officer typed away commands rapidly. Ackerson stared at the computer, and a holographic map of New Mombassa.

Ackerson didn't look up. "You're the new guy, right? The one we picked up at the mansion?"

Neo and Reaver stood at attention. "Yes, sir."

Ackerson looked up. "Ah, you're a fast learner. A few hours after we picked you up, we sent a team into the Hive."

Neo couldn't restrain himself. "You did, _what_?"

Ackerson frowned. "Your obviously not a good learner either. You did, what? _Sir_."

Neo's face contorted in anger. "You did what, _sir_?"

Ackerson grinned. "We sent in a team, apparently the T-Virus was released from the Hive, and has now spread to the city. We've sealed off the city, and sent in advance teams to secure the exits, but we need to extract the city of anyone left. That's where you and your team come in. I don't want any heroics. Just get in there, save as many people as you can, and sterilize the city."

Ackerson didn't seem to give a damn about the people, the way he said it, Neo noted. But Ackerson grinned slightly as he said "sterilize the city". The man was a monster, Neo knew, from talking to the man for a few moments, and from the reputation Ackerson developed in the war.

Neo didn't let his thoughts show, however. "Sir. I'll do the best I can, sir."

Ackerson smiled again. "I know you will, Captain. You're dismissed." Neo and Reaver saluted sharply, came about, and left the dome. The two marched back to their squad, who was still waiting at attention.

"Alright!" shouted Neo. "We have our orders. We maybe the newest unit out there, and we may have no formal training, but I know we are the best of the best! Our orders are to go into the city of New Mombassa, rescue as many people as possible, and kill as many T-virus infected creatures as we can. We'll brief you on the T-virus, contamination, and sterilization procedures enroute. Saddle up!"

With each team leader shouting orders, the squad moved into action; and within five minutes, three Pelicans with the Umbrella Corporation logo on the side, descended. The three-dozen men and women, in full ODSST gear, weapons loaded, boarded the Pelicans, and they lifted into the sky.

Neo grabbed a handhold, and calmed his nervousness. He had a bad feeling about this, a bad feeling indeed.

6. Into The City

****Resident Halo****

Chapter Five

Earth Calendar January 27, 2553.

>New Mombassa, Earth.
Metropolitan area.

The three Pelicans of Neo's squad thundered over the thousands of buildings of New Mombassa, engines roaring. The Pelicans hovered down onto one of the many buildings that were under construction, and their landing gears deployed, the rear ramps opened.

The three-dozen men and women of Neo's squad clambered down the ramps. The pilot of Neo's Pelican spoke over the radio. "We'll pick you up when you signal us," the pilot said. The ODSSTs cleared away

from the Pelicans, and they ascended into the skies.

The ODS'Ts gathered around Neo as the sand and gravel uplifted from the Pelicans cleared. "We'll split into two teams," said Neo, and he selected half of the ODS'Ts, and designated them Blue Team. The other ODS'Ts, including Neo, comprised Red Team.

Reaver, who was Blue Leader, ordered half of his team to scout out the general area. Red Team, and the rest of the Blues, started to set up camp in the building: depositing supplies in well guarded caches, and assembling barricades at each exit, with a sniper at each one.

Five minutes later, the scouts returned. "Nothing, sir," said the scout leader. "No bodies, no signs of humans, alive or otherwise." One of the ODS'Ts started shouting and pointing. "Sir! UNSC Pelicans inbound, they're droppin' troops, 'Hogs, and supply canisters, sir!"

Neo walked over to the ODS'T, and activated his suit's binocular vision. True to the man's word, dozens of ODS'Ts flew over the roads outside the building. Twelve Warthogs were deployed, and dozens of weapon canisters were fired down from the Pelicans. They landed, and a regiment of Marines was outside the building.

Neo motioned for the ODS'Ts to remain silent. While the Marines were fellow soldiers, and could be of use, they were not part of his orders, and while the commanders weren't exactly people Neo liked and swore too, they were still sensible orders. The Warthogs drove off, deep into the city.

When the Marines were gone, Neo ordered five ODS'Ts to gather up the weapons that the Pelicans had left behind, and in minutes, they five returned with handfuls of sniper rifles, rocket launchers, SMGs, pistols of various calibers and types, battle rifles, and fragmentation grenades. One of the ODS'Ts was also carrying a portable turret, and was setting it up at the main entrance.

Neo took a few extra clips for his battle rifle, pocketed two extra Pistols, and gave Reaver two Pistols. One of the ODS'Ts had a portable communications suite with him, and was tuned in on the UNSC frequencies. He listened intently for a few seconds, and looked up at Neo. "Captain," the ODS'T said. "I'm receiving multiple requests for assistance all over the city, all of them report thousands of zombies wandering the city."

Neo put a hand to his head and cursed. _Those Umbrella bastards must've opened up the Hive,_ he thought. _And now Humanity is going to pay for their stupidity._

Neo didn't say any of his thoughts aloud, but simply turned to Reaver, and said: "Alright. Lieutenant, keep your team here, we'll need you as a fall back. The rest of you, you're with me. We're gonna see if we can save some people."

-

Neo grunted under the heavy weight of his equipment. New Mombassa was a large city, and unless they found some cars, it was going to be a long way to and back to base. They needed to find a car, and fast.

Well, truth be told, it was easy to find a car, but a working one was a different story. Dozens of cars lie overturned and on fire on the streets of New Mombassa, with parts missing, blood decorating the frames of the cars.

What worried Neo the most was the fact that not a single person was in sight, dead or alive. The lead snipers of Neo's team took point and rear, keeping an eye on their telescopic sites, and a finger on the trigger. The point man — to be exact point woman of the team, Private Carolyn "Pica" Dennings, signaled to Neo that the area ahead of them was clear.

There was a slight amount of caution in her movements, and from what Neo had read of her psychological profile on the way to the city, this meant more than anything that she was nervous, and again from what Neo had read, she was a crack soldier, fearing nothing. Her nervousness made Neo more nervous.

The team passed a deserted bar, that had a car smashed into the window, and on fire, and the local police station, that was equally deserted; but thousands of spent ammo casings littered the entrance. Neo kept his rifle at ready, expecting anything. He didn't have to wait long. A moan, and Neo spun at the source. It was a black man, beard shaven, in New Mombassa Police uniform. His pistol was missing, and the man was missing half of his face.

"Open fire!" shouted Neo, raising his rifle. The team turned, and fired a dozen rounds into the man. Some hit his chest, and he recoiled back, but kept coming. One round, however, penetrated his skull, and he fell to the ground, dead. Neo looked at his rifle, which read 29, and didn't reload it. Neo looked around, waiting for additional zombies. They usually didn't travel alone. Nothing.

Neo's worries became elevated, but he fought them down. "Let's get moving," he said, putting a hand on one of the ODSTs' shoulder: Private Ryan "Ramos" Reader. The man was obviously scared out of his wits, he never saw something like this, and was obviously never saw someone die. Neo felt sorry for him, but he didn't have time to deal with him. "Get moving, soldier."

Neo's voice woke the man up from his daze, and he nodded. The team continued onward. After a short walk, and not encountering anything, the team heard gunfire break the calm of the silence. Neo motioned to Pica, who activated the 10x zoom on her sniper; ahead of the ODSTs, roughly 250 meters away, were the UNSC marines from earlier.

The Marines kept a tight, but sloppy formation, Battle Rifles, SMGs, and even old Assault Rifles crackling at the masses of zombies; Pica peered into her rifle, and couldn't even count the amount of people that were attacking the Marines. She turned to Neo.

"Sir," she said. "The Marines are putting up a fight, but they are enormously outnumbered. I suggest we move on." Neo paused, and considered what she said.

"Negative soldier," Neo said. "Our orders are to save as many people as possible, and they didn't specify if they were military or otherwise. ODSTs, prepare for combat!" The ODSTs loaded up their weapons, set them to maximum zoom, and charged into the fray. Men,

women, and children alike dropped to the ground -dead- or they got back up, ignoring the pain, and turned to face their attackers.

Many of the zombies broke away from the Marines, and walked towards the ODSs. Pica aimed her Sniper Rifle, and fired four shots into four separate heads. They fell to the ground. Neo and the rest of the team opened up, killing dozens. Ramos, being the squads heavy weapons specialist pulled out the Big Kahuna, the M41 SSR MAV/AW Rocket Launcher, aka the SPNKR.

Ramos loaded two rockets into the chamber of the SPNKR, and fired them at the zombies. Limbs, heads, internal organs, bones, and bodies went flying as the rockets connected into a mass of well over a hundred zombies. All of the zombies now turned towards the ODSs. Neo reloaded his Battle Rifle, and fired a shot into a little girl, who must've been no more than six years old. He yelled into his radio, tuning into the Marines' frequency.

"Now! Here's your chance!" The Marines, baffled, noticed the ODSs, and let out a wild cheer, and fired at the zombies with renewed strength. In a matter of minutes, all the zombies were dead. Ramos pulled out a pistol, and walked up to an old man, who was trying to get back up on his feet. He stepped on his chest, aimed his pistol at his face, and fired a round.

"Stay," Ramos said, and he walked away to rejoin the other surviving Humans. Neo approached the leader of the Marines, who identified himself as Sergeant Van Hawkins. Hawkins took off his helmet, and saluted to Neo.

"I don't know who y'all are, but I'm just as glad to see you. You wouldn't believe it, we just entered the city, looking for survivors, and next thing you know, our battalion was attacked by these-|these _things_. I thought we were goners. What unit are you guys from?"

Neo nodded, and held up a hand as the man spoke frantically. "We're Special Forces sent by the Umbrella Corporation, and under orders from General Ackerson to retrieve any people left alive in the city. I'm Captain Charles O'Neil, commander of these ODSs."

Hawkins paused. "Ackerson? The bastard from the war-|?" He pronounced _the_ as _tha_.

Neo grinned inside his helmet. "How many of you are left?"

Hawkins looked around, and tallied up his men. "I'd say a company, sir. We'll be happy to help you on your mission." Neo nodded.

"Alright, our men are more experienced than yours, so keep a perimeter inside our formation, I don't want to have to add more people to that horde out there." Hawkins protested for a second, and then nodded his head. He barked orders to the Marines, and they complied with Neo's instructions.

Neo paused as the humans orientated themselves, and Neo turned to Hawkins. "You wouldn't happen to have any Warthogs?" he asked. Hawkins responded grimly.

"Sir, we had a small contingent of 'Hogs, but the rest of the battalion took them ahead, or they were destroyed, sir." Neo hung his head up in resignation as Hawkins said this, and he ordered the Humans to proceed further into the city. The hundred or so Marines and ODSs kept their weapons at ready, prepared for anything. They encountered no resistance as they proceeded further into the core of the city, alive or otherwise.

The group arrived at a series of bunkers, where totaled Warthog chassis's, and dozens of spent ammo rounds littered the pavement. Blood was spattered all over these bunkers, and again, there were no bodies. Neo cursed inside, the zombies were here first. A scream penetrated the area, and rifles spun up. A woman with her dress torn came running by the Marines, seeming to not notice them. Behind her, three red dogs came chasing.

The Marines and ODSs didn't need any orders, and hundreds of rounds flew through the air, and connected into the dogs. Blood, flesh, and innards flew, as the dogs barked one last time, and fell to the ground. Neo told the team XO, Johnson, to stay here, and Neo dashed after the woman. He quickly caught up to her, and grabbed her by the arm.

She turned, slapped Neo, which was blocked by his helmet, and she turned again, trying to run away. "Let go of me, you bastard! I won't be one of you!" she screamed. Neo took his helmet off, and grabbed the lady by the cheeks, and turned her around.

"Listen to me!" Neo shouted. That got her attention. She must've known that zombies couldn't talk. She looked at Neo in the eyes. "I'm not one of them," Neo said. "Look. No bites." She calmed down, but was still visibly agitated. "I'm Captain Charles O'Neil, of the UNSC." He lied of course about what he belonged too, Umbrella Corporation didn't exactly carry a favorable name, and he was kind of telling the truth - being a retired UNSC marine -.

"What are you doing here? I thought the UNSC and Umbrella bitches abandoned the city?" Neo sighed; apparently both groups weren't too favorable.

"We didn't. My orders are to bring back any survivors. You look pretty alive to me. Were you bitten?"

The woman shrugged negatively, but blushed. Neo raised an eyebrow. "Were you really bitten? We can save you either way. Tell me the truth." She looked around for a second, and dropped one of the straps of her dress, revealing her left breast, but with a bite mark on it. Neo winced, he had a lover before, and knew how badly that must've hurt.

The woman blushed, and put the dress back over the wound. "How long ago were you bitten?" Neo asked.

"An hour ago," she replied. Neo grimaced. In a few hours, this woman was dead. Neo put his helmet back on, and radioed in his squad. Corporal Hawkins rushed over, rifle at ready. He saluted smartly.

"Corporal," said Neo. "Keep an eye on this woman, see to it she gets

treated." The Corporal nodded, and softly grabbed the woman on the arm, and led her back to the group of Humans.

Neo sighed, and radioed Reaver. "Lieutenant, this is Neo. Come in." A pause, and a crackle later, Reaver responded.

"Go ahead, Neo, I read ya loud and clear," came Reaver's voice.

"Lieutenant, we've scouted out a majority of the city, with the exception of a company of Marines from earlier, and one woman, the city is deserted. We're heading back to base. Over."

"Roger, Captain. See ya back at the barn." Reaver clicked off the radio, and Neo did the same. Neo turned towards his unit, and spoke. "Alright, we're moving out." The hundred or so humans nodded, and walked back to the LZ, with the ODSTs leading.

The Humans walked past the wrecked cars, and deserted buildings with blood spattered, keeping their weapons at ready, every once and a while, a group of zombies popped out, and ambushed the humans. The humans quickly fought back the zombies, and more popped out. A Marine was killed, and the humans were forced to retreat.

Half an hour later, the tired out Marines and ODSTs of Neo's team had made it roughly 250 meters away from the LZ. The woman that Neo had saved earlier was turning deathly white, and Neo was concerned she was going to keel over and die any second now.

The Marines dropped behind a row of wrecked civilian model Hogs, their yellow painted chipped away. Neo sighed, and activated his radio. "Reaver, we're roughly 250 meters away from the base, can you see us?"

A pause, and, "Yeah, we see you. Good to have you back, sir." Neo thought he saw someone in the customary black armor of the ODSTs wave at him, and he waved back. Suddenly, an explosion ripped through the air, a few meters behind Neo and his team.

A massive tanker truck had exploded; it's fuel on fire with a deadly orange blaze. Neo caught sight of a red-dog figure, but with a human outline at the same time. In a second it was gone.

One of the Marines yelped a scream out, as his limp was bitten off, and then his chest ripped open. Another second later, the Marine had disappeared, his attacker nowhere in sight. Neo cursed mentally, and lifted his rifle. Must be a Licker.

The customary staccato and rattle of automatic fire sounded from the LZ, and all around Neo, as the humans fired into what seemed like mid-air. A scream, and a Licker dropped. Another scream, and a Marine died. Then, suddenly, all was quiet. Neo looked around, to see dozens of Lickers surround the humans. The Marines, with the exception of two squads' left, and Hawkins himself, were all dead. The woman however, was still in one piece, but had dropped to the pavement.

The Lickers pounced, but suddenly all dropped to the ground, dead, as thousands of gatling rounds filled the air around the Marines. "What the hell was that!" asked Ramos.

"It doesn't matter," said Neo. "Let's just get back to the LZ!" As Neo prepared to turn tale, the woman on the ground leaped up, and jumped on Neo, clawing. Neo pulled her off his body, and kicked her away. She got up, and leapt at Neo. Ramos, rocket launcher in hand, hit the woman with the massive launcher. Her body hit a Hog with an odd thump, her head twisted in a weird angle.

"Was only a matter of time before she bought it," muttered Neo, as he and the rest of the Humans ran back to the LZ.

Neo leapt over the barricade, and activated his radio. "Mayday, mayday, this is ODST Captain O'Neil of the Umbrella Corporation. Requesting immediate evac, we're getting swamped!"

A crackle. "This is Pelican Gamma 018. We read you loud and clear, we're unable to give you back up, the city is too hot, sorry." And the radio cracked dead before Neo could protest.

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From dozens of miles above the city, Gamma 018 flew over New Mombassa. Corporation Executive Mark McCormick stood over the pilots of the black Umbrella Corporation Pelican. Behind him stood General Ackerson of the UNSC High Council. The cries of help from Neo broke over the radio, and McCormick ordered the pilots not to rescue. The pilot sounded distraught, but obeyed his orders.

Ackerson listened intently, and laughed. "A fitting end for the man," Ackerson said. "Killed by his own accident."

McCormick didn't turn. "We don't know if it was him who released the T-virus."

"Well it was only he, and that other kid. What his name? Reaver? Do you think it could have been anyone else?"

"It doesn't matter who it was," McCormick said. "The point is the virus is all over the city, and we have to sterilize it immediately." McCormick turned to the co-pilot. "Prepare to activate Nemesis prototype. We're going to deal with the virus directly. Have him kill everyone in the city."

Ackerson, who was usually disregarding of Human life, had a look of complete shock on his face. "But my men are still down there. Aren't we going to get them out?"

McCormick turned to Ackerson. "Isn't Neo one of yours? Why the sudden interest in your men now? They are replaceable."

Ackerson was flabbergasted, "Becauseâ€¦" he was cut off. McCormick wiped out an M6E custom pistol, the latest by Umbrella Corporation. The pistol had a larger clip, and fired higher caliber rounds, while have a 5x scope on it. The pistol could also fire high-energy plasma rounds, the type found in a Covenant Carbine.

He pointed it at Ackerson's forehead, "We don't need you anymore, General." He fired; blood and brain matter decorated the back of the Pelican. McCormick lowered the ramp, air gushing inside the Pelican. McCormick held onto a handrail, and Ackerson's body flew out of the

Pelican. McCormick raised the ramp and turned to the pilot.

"Launch the Nemesis." From the rear of the Pelican, a massive black box was connected where a Warthog would be kept, and dropped downwards to New Mombassa. The box fired retro thrusters, and a parachute opened up.

The box slowed to a reasonable speed a dozen meters above the city, and the parachute dropped off, and the box crashed, the shockwave knocking nearby cars over. The side panels of the box dropped, and a massive, part human, part monster, wielding a massive Rocket Launcher, a better model than the kind used by the UNSC, and a chain gun that looked like it came from a Warthog in it's hands.

Its single eye on the left side of its face glared a bright red, and it walked off into the city, looking for anything to shoot at.

7. Nemesis

****Resident Halo****

Chapter Six

Earth Calendar January 28, 2553.

>New Mombassa, Earth.
Metropolitan area.

As Neo peered into the sky, dozens of Pelicans hovered over the city of New Mombassa, scurrying around in the air like the birds they were named after. The radio chatter had increased tenfold in the past hours that Neo, and his team of ODS'Ts had been stranded in New Mombassa. The amount of zombie attacks and pleas for help had increased greatly, and then suddenly, decreased.

Strange sightings of an unknown creature were reported, and then the report shut off. Neo kept his fear down, the safety of his squad depended on it. For now, they'd worry about getting the fuck out of the city, and the monster later. A few hours later, the Pelicans in the air had disappeared, and nightfall hit the city.

Neo had lain down on a makeshift bed, made from a Warthog's chairs. It was uncomfortable, yes, but it was better than sleeping on the road, with all the blood on them. A few waves of zombies attacked the ODS'T camp, but were quickly mowed down by the snipers and chain guns.

The Marines were tired out, and Neo had them rest, while his ODS'Ts manned the camp's defenses. Neo had the ODS'Ts switch off every hour, and alert the second watch of anything nearby. Neo's mind raced with the events of the past week: from the Hive, to this very moment. Neo calmed himself, and eventually fell asleep.

Corporal Carl "Chaos" Phregos was busy working on a Warthog chassis that was damaged long ago. Chaos was trying to get the damn thing started up again, but his primary concern was the radio. The squad's radio had died out a few hours ago, and if the team had any chance of getting out of this nightmare, they'd need a working radio.

Neo had awoken from his slumber, and walked over to Chaos. "How's the repair work going?" Neo asked. Chaos didn't turn, but kept working on

the car.

"Fine," said Chaos, not including the honorific _sir_. Chaos was a loyal Umbrella soldier, and he had heard the rumors of what had happened at the Hive; and the rumors of Neo's betrayal to Umbrella. He liked Neo, but didn't respect him. Neo apparently didn't notice the lack of the honorific, or didn't care. "I've managed to get the fuel problems fixed up, but it'll be sometime before I can get her-" and he was cut off by the sound of a mechanical roar from the car.

"Gotcha ya little bastard! As I was sayin', I got the car up. There's a few rounds for the Gauss Cannon, but not enough for a sustained firefight." Neo nodded.

"Alright. I'll send a scout team to find a new location. I want to stay on the move from this monster that we've been hearing reports of. Take a break, Corporal, you look bushed." Chaos nodded, and walked back to the camp. Neo sighed, the man was a good soldier, but to damn loyal to the Corporation. He'd have to deal with him sometime before they left the city.

Three of the UNSC Marines climbed aboard the Warthog, and sped off, trailing dust, blood, and papers as they rushed deeper into the city. A quiet hour later, with the sun in the horizon, the Marines returned. The UNSC Corporal who was in charge of the team saluted to Neo.

"Sir, we've found an optimal location for our new base camp. He pulled out an old fashioned map of the city, and laid it on the street, keeping it in place with his SMG. He pointed to a sector of the city that, if Neo's memory served him well, was under construction.

"It's called Headlong, and it's about three miles away from our present location," and he indicated it on the map, "it's at the edge of the city, and one of the few areas sealed off by Umbrella." He said the name with obvious scorn. "There are three buildings already set up in this area, and one under construction. I think we can hide out well in one of these three buildings."

Neo nodded, and called out to the ODSs. "Men! We're moving out! Pack up your gear, and meet over here in five minutes!" The ODSs and Marines scrambled into action, and in five minutes had the camp secured, and all gear taken. Then, the survivors started the long march to Headlong. The Warthog that Chaos had fixed drove along side them at a slow pace; it's Gauss Cannon watching over the Marines and ODSs.

The Humans were ambushed twice on their five hour trek to Headlong, and by the time the Humans arrived, only a squad of Marines, and fifteen ODSs remained, the Warthog destroyed in an ambush by a group of Lickers and mutant dogs. Neo looked at this mission chronometer, which read "_2200 Hours, January 30, 2553_". The Humans walked through a massive ten-meter traffic gate, which sealed the sector from all others.

Neo looked around, and noticed the buildings that the Corporal pointed earlier on the map. There was a police station, with dozens of Warthog chassis blown up and on fire in front of it. Neo activated

his binocular vision, and noticed a pair of _soda_ machines knocked down in front of the station. There was also a small villa, with a bridge connecting over an incomplete high way running through the sector to an even larger building.

Neo could see, hundreds of meters away, a massive ten-story building under construction, with the Umbrella Corporation logo emblazoned on the sides. _Figures that they would be here,_ Neo thought. Neo ordered the contingent of Marines and ODSTs up to the villa, and had the snipers keep watch at each entrance to the villa. The villa was vulnerable if someone jumped up onto it from the concrete pillars below, but the zombies weren't that intelligent, so Neo was pretty confident that they'd be safe.

Neo had the first watch take position, placed his rifle down, and sat down, lying his head back on a metal structure jutting out of the villa, and he quickly fell to sleep.

"Sir! Sir! Wake up!" Neo opened his eyes wearily as Reaver shook Neo's shoulders with both his hands. "Sir! Zombies!" Neo was alert.

"Where?" Neo asked, standing up, grabbing his rifle; he didn't have to have Reaver answer his question he just looked around. For a moment, Neo thought that there was nothing there, but he blinked twice. All around them, from dozens of meters away, came thousands and thousands of zombies. His combat instincts became alert, and he didn't hesitate.

"Fire!" Neo shouted, and fired a three-round burst into a teenage girl. The girl flew back, and knocked over a dozen zombies behind her. Neo heard Reaver mutter a joke.

"Guess this is why we haven't seen many survivors," Reaver said, as he emptied a clip from his SMG into the crowd of zombies. Ramos fired his last two rockets into the horde, and chucked his rocket launcher at a group of zombies. Chaos and Pica didn't even have to aim their snipers to get a shot.

A scream, and an ODST was grabbed and taken into the mass of hands. Neo primed a grenade, and yelled: "Grenades! Over the top!" And he threw it. Multiple plumes exploded in the sea of people, and limbs and blood filled the air. Neo could barely hear anything over the crackle of automatic weapons, and the thousands of moans that rang through the air.

Neo heard an engine whine, and a UNSC Longsword flew overhead, and dropped a pair of precision bombs, and fired its chain gun into the crowd. Neo shielded his eyes, and a bright light filled the villa.

When Neo opened his eyes again, a good amount of the zombies were vaporized. Bodies littered the streets, with blood oozing out of every pore in their body. Limbs littered the villa, including some that belonged to the fallen ODSTs. A few zombies tried to get up, but the Marines shoot each one in the head. A good hundred were left, and the humans quickly brought them down with dozens of well-placed headshots.

Neo inspected his weapons, and turned to each of the surviving

humans. He counted them up. All the Marines were still alive, but only ten ODSs were left: Snake, Ramos, himself, Reaver, Pica, Chaos, Navy, Keith, and two others he didn't remember off the top of his head.

He looked at each of them. "Any of you have any ammo left?" They inspected their own weapons, and nodded negatively. "Great," said Neo.

"Sir," said Reaver. "Don't you think we should inspect the Police Station, or at least the other two buildings here? There might be some weapons left behind." Neo nodded.

"Alright," he said, facing the twenty survivors. "We'll split up into five groups of four. Alpha group," and he pointed to Chaos, Pica, Reaver, and a Marine. "You'll stay here. Beta group, clean up these bodies, search them for some ammo, weapons, anything. Keep your guard up, some of them might be fakin' it." The four Marines that comprised Beta group nodded, and got on with their grim task.

"Delta group," and he pointed to Snake, Keith, Ramos, and Navy. "Check that building, let's just call it the Building, for now, for any supplies we could use. Epsilon group, inspect the Umbrella building. The rest of you are with me, we're headin' to the Police Station."

The men and women nodded, and got to work.

A mile away, a car was overturned, and another exploded; mild events in New Mombassa since the Hive incident. A group of zombies scattered and were brought down by a quick burst from a heavy machine gun, the kind used on a Warthog. The massive creature hefted it with one hand.

A zombie snuck up behind the creature, and bit it in the neck. The creature didn't wince, but casually turned around, and fired a dozen rounds in the zombie's chest, and another dozen in her head. The woman's corpse, riddled with bullets, fell to the ground, adding onto a trail of zombies that was thousands long, from cats, dogs, and humans, to Lickers.

The creature's eye glared red, and it marched off in search of new prey.

Neo turned over the body of a police officer, and a red rectangular crate. He closed the eyes of the officer, and relieved him of his sidearm. Neo and his team had been lucky in their search for supplies. They had taken one of the many supply crates that littered the station, and filled it with whatever they could find. Dozens of spare magazines for every type of weapon imaginable, rocket launchers, grenades, sniper rifles, it was all here.

They also found a radio, but it was long since rendered inoperable. One of the Marines also "liberated" dozens of soda cans from the machines outside. They were still surprisingly cold. The team also found spare rations, and batteries, and a couple of patches for their armor, and extra body armor for the Marines.

It was all-good for Neo's team, but not for Neo himself. All he wanted was a radio to contact someone, and get the hell out of this

bad horror film. A nap would be nice too, in a nice, warm, feather bed. Neo was lugging the supply crate and walked the short distance back to the villa, where the other teams had found similar luck.

From the looks of it, there was enough ammo to last a siege, and there were multiple turrets set up that the humans had salvaged from the Warthogs destroyed near the station. The humans had enjoyed a few hours of silence untilâ€¦|

The creature knew no name. It did not remember anything of its previous life. Only its objective: kill anyone and everything that moved.

It powered up its massive gun and rocket launcher, as it walked through a massive gate, with the bodies of dozens and the vehicles they drove littered the streets of the once mighty Human race. The only signs of activity were directly ahead. The computer controlled sensor systems in its built-in HUD, located in its only eye activated.

Marines: 10
>ODSTs: 10

Objective: engage and destroy Marines and ODSTs.

It raised its weapons and prepared to attack.

Snake looked completely and utterly shocked, even through his helmeted features. "What the hell is that?" he asked, lowering his Battle Rifle scope. Neo walked over to Snake, and looked through his own Battle Rifle. Neo froze as well.

"Nemesisâ€¦|"

"What, sir?" asked Snake.

"Nothing. That creature is slow, but well armed and armored. We need to get to better ground. Watch out, he has a rocket launcher!" And the creature, which Neo called "Nemesis", raised its weapon and locked on to the three Marines manning the turrets. The launcher sputtered three rockets, and they flew true to their targets. Neo shouted a warning, and ducked behind a massive concrete pillar. The other ODSTs and Marines followed suit.

The three Marines didn't have time to jump off from the turrets, and were engulfed in a burning orange flame. Bits of concrete were blasted away from the pillar, and Neo shouted. "Open fire!" And he opened up with his Battle Rifle. Ramos raised his rocket launcher, and shouted to an ODST,

"Snake! Help me load this up!" Snake picked up a rocket pack, opened it, and locked them into the launcher.

On Nemesis' HUD, warning lights flashed. The HUD targeted Ramos and Snake: _Threat Moderate._ It raised its Machine gun, and lowered the Rocket Launcher. It fired, and hundreds of round casings were ejected, and littered the roadways.

Ramos and Snake were wiped out without a chance, and with Nemesis

firing that damned machine gun, there was no way Neo would be able to grab the rocket. In a few seconds, Nemesis had wiped out the last Marines of Neo's team, and killed Keith, and the two ODSTs whose names were forgotten by Neo.

Pica, Chaos and Reaver jumped off the villa, and down behind a wrecked bus, using it as cover. Navy quickly grabbed the last few weapons and gear he could, and followed suite. Neo stood his ground behind the concrete pillar. A bullet flew past, and nicked him in the shoulder. Neo winced, but stood his ground.

A Pelican flew overhead, and Nemesis roared, as if in disappointment, and walked off in the other direction. Neo blinked, but jumped from the villa and joined his fellow ODSTs.

"Any idea what the fuck just happened?" Asked Neo. Before anyone could reply, the zombie hordes returned, and the ODSTs were back at it, fighting for their lives against the endless waves of undead.

Mark McCormick stood at the ramp of the Pelican Gamma 018, and watched as dozens of Umbrella soldiers secured the Nemesis Prototype. The Umbrella goons were lucky, no zombies yet. The Nemesis looked as fierce as ever, but McCormick noticed something on its hideous face: a look of disappointment. McCormick grinned, the creature wanted to stay and fight.

He'd have to make a note of that when they returned to Umbrella HQ. Nemesis was strapped into another Orbital Drop Box, and hooked up to the Pelican. The soldiers clambered up the ramp, and the turbines of the craft whined, as it flew into the sky.

Neo ejected a clip from his M6C and reloaded, as Navy and the other ODSTs were struggling to get a Warthog inside _the_ Base, which was now pocketed with bullets and casings. The Humans were lucky to have found so much ammo earlier on. What they weren't about was that the massive Titanium-A blast doors, which connected Headlong to the other sectors of the city, had slammed shut as Nemesis left.

Now it was just the five humans, and hundreds of angry and hungry zombies.

Navy hit the gas, and the car crushed the concrete block that was keeping all motor vehicles outside of the building. Navy drove the car up the stairs of the Base, past an open catwalk, and up another staircase. He made a right turn, drove for a few meters, and slammed into a pile of packing boxes.

Navy, Pica, Chaos, and Reaver went quick to work setting up the barricade of boxes, while Neo watched them with his rifle. They set up in a matter of seconds, and Navy climbed into the 'Hog. Zombies, moaning, and coming up by the dozens, walked up the staircases, and charged towards the barricade. Navy opened up with the chain-gun, and the zombies went down.

A few got up, heads still intact, but were brought down by a well-placed grenade. A Licker leaped out from nowhere, and jumped onto Navy, biting chunks of flesh out from his body. Neo shouted a cry, and fired with his pistol and SMG. Reaver, Chaos, and Pica ignored the Licker, and focused on the hordes of zombies. The Licker

uttered a scream, and it extended its tongue at Neo.

Neo dropped his pistol and SMG, and pulled out a standard issue combat knife, and sliced the Licker's tongue off. It screamed, and pounced at Neo. Neo kicked it in the creature's abdomen, and sliced with his knife. It screamed once, and died.

The zombies still kept coming, and Neo was running out of ammo. He relieved Navy of his gear, sheathed his knife, picked up his pistol and SMG and shouted. "Come on! We gotta get out of here!" Neo leapt out of _the_ Base, with Chaos, Pica, and Reaver following suit.

They ran literally around the sector, with the zombies chasing. Half running, and half shooting, the ODSs fled for their lives. It was a matter of hours later that they found themselves back at _the_ Base. The Warthog that Navy worked so hard to get in was totaled.

Navy cursed at the burning wreckage, as it somehow managed to fall down the stairs. He went to pick up the chain-gun of the 'Hog, and in moments, found himself very much dead. A zombie was hiding near the Warthog, and now Navy lay on the ground. Neo aimed his pistol and killed the zombie with a headshot.

Pica walked over to Navy's corpse, and picked up the chain-gun, and the group returned to the Base.

A beautiful blonde girl with a very attractive figure, and a few dozen ammo clips and guns of various types was watching the ODSs through her sniper scope. She saw the flashes of gunfire in the building just across from her, and the three black-armored ODSs jumping from the building and down into a Warthog, with zombies chasing after them.

She was quite surprised that the zombies had not found her yet, probably because she was hiding relatively high up at the Umbrella Corporation building. The ODSs had driven from the Base, to Main Street, over the incomplete Main Street Bridge, and over to Exterior City Gate G95. The woman frowned, the gate was opened.

_I'm going to have to deal with that,_she thought. She peered through the sniper rifle again, and noticed the Humans in their deadlocked position, with thousands of zombies in the highway outside charging down at them. She sighed, and decided to be kind enough to help them.

She hefted her rocket launcher and sniper rifle, and jumped from the incomplete fifth story of Umbrella, down to the next story, and continued till she reached an optimal firing position.

"Oh shit," said Neo, as the hundreds of zombies came walking towards them. Chaos cursed, and Reaver aimed the turret at the zombies. He pulled the firing stubs, but a click sounded. Nothing. The gun was out of ammo. Cursing, Reaver pulled out his pistol, and was prepared to make his last stand.

As a group of zombies were within grabbing distance to the ODSs, they fell, as the staccato of sniper fire sounded through the air. The ODSs were confused, and so were, apparently, the zombies. Then, a pair of rockets flew from nowhere, and connected with the zombies,

killing dozens.

The zombies looked around, searching for their new assailant, while others continued towards the ODSs. Neo, Chaos, and Reaver opened fire with their guns, dropping dozens. More sniper staccato, and four rows of zombies dropped. _Whoever is firing that_, thought Neo, i_s very talented_.

>Neo threw a grenade, and dropped a bunch of the zombies, with Chaos and Reaver doing the same. Pistol fire and SMG fire now sounded through the air, and Neo turned to face the source. A woman with short cut blonde hair, and Neo noted, deep blue eyes, came firing, sprinting towards the ODSs. <p>

With thanks to the woman, the zombies were dispatched in a few seconds. She reloaded, flipped her pistols, and holstered them, and walked to the ODSs. She grinned, and held an outstretched hand to Neo. Neo grabbed her hand, and grinned back, but realized she couldn't see it.

He shook her hand, and took his helmet off. "I'm Captain Charles O'Neil, my comrades call me Neo. I'm commander of these men."

She raised her eyebrows in mock surprise. "Only three, Captain? Or should I just call you Neo? Doesn't your employers have enough to give you more."

Neo grimly smiled. "I had a squad under my command, but they were killed."

She frowned. "I'm sorry for your men." She noted his Umbrella insignia, and winced. "Well, sort of." Neo followed her gaze, and frowned as well.

"Well, who are you?" blurted out Chaos. The woman looked up at Chaos' reflective helmet, and stared him in the eye, even though she couldn't see his eyes.

"Myâ€| associates call me Cam," she said. Chaos didn't seem impressed at all.

"Where did you learn to do, well whatever the hell it was that you did?" he asked impatiently.

"I work for â€|an organization dedicated to bringing down Umbrella using whatever means possible, from peaceful toâ€|well whatever we can do."

Chaos took his helmet off, and looked outraged. "So you're a terrorist." Out of the group present, he was the only one actually loyal to Umbrella.

A spark flared in Cam's eyes. "I think some people would call me a revolutionary." She stepped closer to Chaos, with equal rage. Neo stepped in between the two, and held up his hands.

"Enough! We need to worry about sealing this gate, otherwise, the infection will spread outside the city. We maybe free, but others shouldn't die because of our carelessness."

Cam broke eye contact with Chaos, and looked up with Neo, the spark

lost. "Your right." She did a mock salute. "What do you want me to do, _El_ _Capitan_?" Neo grinned.

"We need to find the emergency gate controls, and close the gate, permanently. We don't have much time." As if to emphasize his point, a pair of Longswords, and dozens of Pelicans roared above the humans. "Reaver, stay here and guard the Warthog. Chaos, you, Cam, and me will go and find the emergency controls, and shut the gate down. We need to hurry."

Chaos simply put his helmet on and nodded. Cam gave Neo a wink. Neo put his own helmet on. "Let's go."

Chaos didn't think much of anything out of Umbrella, and he _especially_ didn't think highly of Cam. She was just another show-off, smartass bitch trying to depose of his company. But she was also the key to his getting out of this city alive, and that infuriated him. Neo didn't seem to notice his anger, or he didn't seem to care, and Chaos frankly didn't care if Neo did care.

Cam gave Neo some extra clips for his pistols, and he gave her his SMGs. Neo, with dual M6Cs, smartly led the group. Cam was in the middle, and Chaos brought up the rear. The trio walked upward on the totaled First Street Road, as fire, cars, and craters pocketed the road. There were no bodies on the street, but there was also no blood either.

Chaos kept walking, keeping him cool, and found him in the lead of the group. He kept walking, with no purpose, until a shadow snuck up behind him, and grabbed him on the neck. He spun, pistol at ready, and foundâ€|Cam, grabbing him. He almost shot, but realized she was giggling.

"Sorry, I just had to do that." Chaos rolled his eyes at the woman's foolishness, and returned to his position in the rear.

Cam giggled one more time, and consulted a portable wrist-computer, and typed in a few commands. She pointed to the right, to an elevated catwalk, which lead to a small building. "It's in there," she said. Neo nodded, and crouch-walked over to the catwalk. He did a jump and roll, both pistols aimed forward, swept the area. He nodded back at Cam, and she nodded in return.

Chaos sighed explosively in disgust. Neo was being such a showoff in front of the heretical woman, and that lowered his own opinion of his commander. Cam cautiously walked up to Neo's position, and slipped on accident, grabbing onto Neo. He turned, and grabbed her back up. She smiled, and blushed, as she got to her feet.

Chaos rolled his eyes and just walked past the two morons. Neo held up a hand. "Wait! We don't know if-" And before he could finish his warning, a zombie in police uniform jumped out of a closet, and grabbed Chaos. He hissed, and took a chunk clean out of Chaos' neck. He groaned, spun around, and kicked the zombie in the crotch, and then pushed him away.

The zombie bounced into Cam, who shrieked, forgetting her training, and Neo punched the man in the face. Teeth scattering out from his mouth, the zombie fell to the concrete ground, dead. Chaos simply rubbed his wound, which made it hurt more, and got up. He activated

the suit's flashlights, and climbed the stairs of the small shack.

He kicked open the rusted metal door, and found no bodies. He also found a small console flashing red and green warning, walked over to it, and smiled. "This must be it." He kicked the console, and it flashed red, and then to green, and stopped.

The console was dead. Chaos cursed, and broke open the access panel, and started to connect the wiring together. A few moments later, the computer flashed to life again, and he stood up triumphant. He heard a clank, and didn't turn around. Neo and Cam were right behind him, he knew, and it must've been them.

A pair of hands grabbed him on the neck, and he didn't turn. "Cam, we don't have time for these- Ah!" A zombie had emerged from the darkness, and bit Chaos again, and again and again.

The last thing Chaos saw was the trickling of blood down his eyes, and intense pain as he was eaten alive.

Neo and Cam heard the scream, and came rushing into the room. A woman had taken multiple bites into Chaos, who was slumped on the floor, blood spilling from dozens of injuries.

Cam raised a pistol, and shot the woman in the head, which fell to the ground dead. Cam walked up to her, and shot her four more times in the head, just to be sure, and turned to Chaos, and fired four more into his head. She reloaded. "I have to make sure he won't just pop out and kill us." She said.

She walked up to the console, and read the words flashing on the screen. She hit a few commands, and then crouched down, and placed a charge on the wiring of the console.

"The gate should be sealed now," she said. "Now to make sure it stays that way." A beep, and she grabbed Neo, who she noted had a nice physique, and ran out the door. "Come on!" The two ran out of the shack, and into the street, when it exploded.

"Gotta be loud, huh?" asked Neo.

Cam grinned. "Yep."

Reaver heard the explosion as the gates slammed shut. No zombies yet, and that was a good sign. A few minutes later, Cam and Neo walked up to the Warthog. Reaver noticed that Chaos wasn't with them. "What happened to Chaos?"

Neo and Cam shook their heads. "Didn't make it." The radio on the 'Hog crackled.

"Attention all Umbrella personal! The city is about to be sterilized, evac the area, repeat, evac the area!" And the Radio clicked dead.

"Sterilized?" asked a confused Cam. Neo turned to Reaver, and jumped into the driver seat, Reaver removed the turret, and sat in the back part of the car. "Get in! Fast!" Cam was still confused, but jumped into the passenger seat of the car. Neo hit the gas, and sped quickly

away from New Mombassa.

From afar, a pair of Longswords was rushing towards the city. Neo wasn't very sure about their chances for survival now. The Warthog wouldn't be able to clear the city in time, even at max speed. Cam spoke and ruined Neo's thought. "So, what's this sterilization?"

"The Umbrella Corporation is going to nuke the city, and wipe out the infection, and the potential to spread. The blast will be so large, I don't think we'll be able to get out of here alive."

Cam blinked, but didn't look terrified. "Well, how will they cover it up?"

"They don't," said Neo. "They simply say that there was an outbreak that was completely unstoppable, and they were preserving the human race. No one will know that they were the ones responsible for the outbreak."

Neo kept driving as he spoke, but Cam jumped up and pointed, which caused Neo to hit the brakes. "What!"

"There! It's a Pelican!" Neo looked ahead, blinked and rubbed his eyes, and looked again. It was still there, a Pelican without UNSC markings or the Umbrella Corporation logo. "What the hell is that doing here?"

Cam smiled. "My ride. Come on!" And she jumped out of the Warthog, Neo and Reaver behind her. Cam strapped herself in the pilot's chair, and fired up the engines. Neo and Reaver closed the ramps, and grabbed a handhold. In a few minutes, they were in the air.

"Compliments of my associates," Cam said. The Longswords fired a missile, and Neo squinted to ID it. It was probably a Shiva nuclear missile, the kind used in the Covenant War. Those things were outdated, but they still got the job done. The Pelican was a safe distance away when a bright flash lit up the sky. Neo activated the rear camera of the Pelican, and put it on the co-pilot's screen.

A big ball of energy had engulfed New Mombassa, and a shockwave shook the Pelican. The craft's systems, however, were fully functional. A mushroom cloud formed over the ruins of the city, with dozens of craft flying as fast as they could away from the din of death.

"We're we going now?" asked Reaver, as Neo switched the panel off.

"To my associates."

8. Apocalypse

Admiral Neo: Since I've been neglecting my few faithful reviewers, and suffered from a lack of reviews (it's a 25,000 plus story for bloody sake), I'm gonna now start responding to all my few reviews (that is if I get a ton more, and this'll become impractical).

Inquisitor Arnolis: Nice to see you like the story, it's only half-way done ;-)

>Gruntaro: Glad you liked it!
Tristan Hutchinson: Nice to see a faithful reviewer :-D Well, it's long enough to be a novel.

>SPECIALGUY: I based the names off the first parts of names of members of my Halo 2 clan. (Wow, a lot of "of"s).
Concussion: I'm glad you enjoyed the Prologue. I'm a fan of the Resident Evil series, and a huge fan of Halo. Watching the two movies (my girlfriend at the time thought I'd like them, so she showed them to me) really inspired me, and I loved playing Zombies on Halo 2, so that was what compelled me to write this fanfic.

>FanfictionFreakofnature: Wow, highest rating yet! I don't know if I'll write a sequel, I have my own original novel to work on to. What I do plan on doing is restarting Halo: First Strike: An Alternate View ;-)

Anyways, on with the show!

****Resident Halo****

Chapter Seven

Earth Calendar February 1, 2553.

>Location unknown.
Secret "Organization" base, Earth.

The Pelican flew through the serene dark-blue sky, gracefully skimming the air currents as it flew over a series of islands. Cam had directed the Pelican towards the once inhabited Hawaiian Islands. During the Covenant invasion, all life on the surface of the once beautiful archipelago was wiped out.

Cam keyed a series of commands as the Pelican descended towards one of the smaller, and newer islands. The craft continued to descend, and a pair of massive armored doors opened. The Pelican descended down into the abyss below. The craft hovered slowly to the ground, and the armored doors closed shut. Darkness enveloped the Pelican.

Floodlights flickered on all around the Pelican, revealing a massive hanger bay filled with Pelicans, Longswords, and even a few Seraphs left over from the war. The Pelican ramp lowered, and Neo, Cam, and Reaver got off. Dozens of technicians, men in civilian clothes, and some in white military uniforms emerged from a pair of doors.

One of the uniformed men walked up to Cam, and saluted, who returned the salute. The man broke out into a grin, and hugged Cam, who hugged him back. After a few moments, they broke their embrace. "Good to see you back safe and sound, Cam. After we heard about New Mombassa, we thought you didn't make it."

Cam grinned. "I'm too good to die." And the two broke out into a laugh. The uniformed man turned to Reaver and Neo, looking them over.

"Mind introducing me to your friends?" he asked.

Cam nodded and with a gesture, motioned to each. "This is Captain Charles O'Neil, "Neo". And this is Lieutenant Niles Roberto,

"Reaver." Both used to work for the Umbrella Corporation."

The man nodded at Neo, and a sign of recognition crossed his face when Reaver's name was mentioned. "Reaver?" the man asked. Reaver nodded. "Niles! I thought you bought it at the Hive. We haven't heard from you for a while."

Cam with a look of puzzlement, "You know him?"

The uniformed man nodded. "He isn't an Umbrella security agent, but rather one of our undercover operatives. I assume your fianc e didn't make it out?"

Reaver solemnly nodded. "A pity. And where'd you pick this one up? He's quite the looker." Cam blushed lightly.

"He was the leader of an ODST squad, and they got wiped out. I picked him up on my escape."

"I take it he isn't a big Umbrella lover. Ah! How rude! I haven't introduced myself. I am Colonel John Abrams, founder of the Organization." Abrams turned to Cam. "They've been some developments in the past few hours, you're needed in the conference room." He and Cam walked away, but Abrams paused, and spun around to Neo and Reaver. "Your welcome to come, of course." The two former ODSTs looked at each other, and nodded.

The four walked out of the docking bay into a crisp, white hallway connected to dozens of other corridors. Abrams lead them to the first corridor on the left, right, and continued down the complex web of metal and man. Dozens of white uniformed technicians and officers nodded and saluted at the four as they made their way to the conference room.

Neo spoke up during the long trek. "So, why did you found the Organization?" Abrams kept walking, his back to Neo.

"I had  inherited a large fortune from my wealthy parents, and their relatives. I was told they died of natural causes, but it turns out they were  they were assassinated by Umbrella. I swore to avenge their deaths, and sought to bring them down. I did some digging into the Corporation, and found that they had advanced bioweapons under-development. I was about to strike, but the Covenant War broke out, so I joined the UNSC." Abrams sighed. "You were on Alpha Halo, right son?"

"Yes, sir."

'I thought I recognized your name. My condolences. I was on the Marathon with Admiral Huff when I heard about the hit. I'm sorry."

Neo remembered the sounds from scarcely a few months ago. _Jack looked at Neo, grinning, saluted. His smirk was lost in the field of battle and death, as an armored alien jumped from it's hiding spot in the trees, with energy sword activated, sliced the Marine in two. The others turned, brought their assault rifles to bear, and fired._

_The alien miraculously dodged the fire, cloaked, and leapt towards

the Marines. Jones lost an arm, and fell to the dirt, screaming. An armored foot stepped on his head, silencing him forever. It sprinted forward, and sliced the men and women of Charlie Company to pieces. It turned towards Neo; his ammo depleted, and prepared to charge._

It didn't. Instead it cloaked, and leapt into the trees.

Neo never forgot that day. "They died with honor, sir."

Abrams nodded. Cam and Reaver were silent. The four arrived at the conference room, though conference room wasn't an appropriate name for the room. It was as large as a football stadium, and round in shape. Dozens of rows of chairs lined the walls of the room, and a massive, 3D theatre sized screen with a podium in front of it was in the center of the room.

Abrams motioned for Reaver, Cam, and Neo to take a seat. They did so, with Cam sitting next to Neo, and Reaver at his right. Neo stared at Abrams unnerving, as Abrams walked to the podium. Neo appeared calm, but in his eyes, Cam could tell something was wrong. She reached out and squeezed his hand. He squeezed back.

Hundreds of white uniformed men and women of the Organization stood in front of each of the chairs in the "conference room". Heavy two-meter thick doors slammed shut at the two entrances in the back of the room. Two guards stood at each one.

"Please be seated," said Abrams. They did so. He activated a laser pointer, and turned pressed a button. The 3D screen activated, humming as it did. On the screen was an air shot of a classical, mid-western American city.

"This," Abrams said, pointing with the laser, "is Raccoon City. The very place that Umbrella started." There was some wincing and flinching in the room, even a few boos, at the mentioning of Umbrella. "When we received reports of a outbreak in Tokyo and New Mombassa, we were waiting for the largest outbreak in history to occur in Raccoon. No such thing happened, however." The image changed to a team of ODSTs with rifles at ready, running through ruined streets. "We sent a team in to inspect the city. At 0600, their Pelican entered the city limits. Ten minutes later, we lost contact with them. Orbital probes show temporal disturbances in the city, and we believe that a prototype Forerunner artifact has been activated in the city.

As you may ore may not know, New Mombassa has been destroyed, but valuable information has been brought back by our best, Agent Cam, and two ODSTs, Reaver and Neo."

He indicated the trio, and everyone in the room, turned to face them. "Since this mission is dangerous, and probably the most important one we have, I'm asking you. Cam, Reaver, and Neo. Will you go in to Raccoon, find out whatever you can from Umbrella, and rescue any survivors? It's very dangerous, we don't know what else might be in the city, and the odds of your survival are minimal. Will you do it?"

The three nodded, without hesitation. Everyone in the room broke out into a series of applause. Abrams joined them.

"Good! Your sacrifice will not be in vain. We'll be sending you to the ex-UNSC Alliance, one of our frigates in orbit. You'll do an Orbital Drop into Raccoon. We won't be giving you any additional support; you're on your own. If we don't hear from you in five days, we'll assume you've been killed, send in a preliminary team, and then nuke the city. Understood?"

The three nodded again. "Good! This concludes are meeting. Dismissed." The heavy doors opened, and the hundreds of people marched out of the room, chatting amongst themselves. Abrams walked to Neo, Reaver, and Cam when the room was empty. "I'll see to it you get the finest equipment we have. I hope you guys make it. Your transport leaves in thirty minutes, so you might want to get your affairs in order." And he walked out of the room.

Alice blinked as the blinding bright lights overhead penetrated the not-so-serene darkness of Raccoon City. It was scarcely a few hours since she had wondered out of the Raccoon City Hospital, past the wrecked cars and few bodies that scattered the city. Now she was on a mission to find Doctor Ashford's daughter and get the hell out of the city.

Fortunately, she was not alone. A former Umbrella Corporation operative, Carlos Olivera, an ex-S.T.A.R.S. member, Jill Valentine, and a civilian a black guy named Lloyd Jefferson Wayne, or L.J. were the only help she had. And it's not like she needed help anyway. Umbrella did something to her, and she was going to kick their sorry asses for it.

The lights dimmed down, but Alice swore she could see a film surrounding the city. She shrugged, they were still alive and that's all that mattered. Carlos held up a hand to his forehead, looking into the sky. "Quiet a fireworks show, no? Come on, we need to get moving." Alice nodded, and continued on. Not noticing the three fiery streaks soaring through the night.

Neo gritted his teeth through the rough ride. Abrams suggested that the trio take Orbital Drop Pods, and Neo agreed. Now he was regretting it. It was a long time since Neo made a drop. The pod shook as it broke through the atmosphere, and the temperature inside the pod rose dramatically.

The breaking thrusters fired, and a metal parachute fired, slowing the pod down. A few seconds later, it detached, and the final thrusters fired. The craft halted for a second, and Neo noticed a fine filament surround him and the pod. It disappeared in a second, and the craft resumed its descent.

Thud! And the pod's single hatch blew off. "Could we possibly make any more noise!" shouted Cam through her suits radio. She had ditched her comfy, and exposing, civilian clothes for the ODST armor. Reaver's pod smashed down a second later. "Guess soâ€¦!" she muttered.

Dozens of smaller weapons canisters dropped after the three drop pods, and landed with a resounding thud. Neo gave Cam an S2 AM Sniper Rifle, and Reaver hefted a Rocket Launcher. Neo took a Shotgun, Battle Rifle, Pistol, and SMG, and a double handful of ammo. The others did the same.

"If we get into any hairy situations, we'll retreat to here. Let's move out."

Alice had somehow gotten separated from the group. They encountered a pack of Lickers after the blinding light. One of them jumped on her, and pushed her off a ledge, down into a pile of destroyed cars. The creature scratched her, but her wound had already healed rapidly.

Alice found she could think faster, hear and see things she never noticed before, and lift things she couldn't before. _ Whatever they did, they made me into some freak Supergirl._

A pair of zombies walked by her, and she pulled her pistols out, ready to shoot them.

...And they just walked on past her, not noticing that she existed. She lowered her gun. _ Oddly I guess I'm not appetizing anymore. _ She kept on walking down a deserted ally when three loud thumps and a dozen smaller ones sounded. She turned in the direction of the sound.

A few kilometers away Alice thought. _Wait! How do I know that?_ A smaller voice in her head told her she could make it there in a few minutes at a full run. And she did.

Neo, Cam, and Reaver walked away from the LZ in a triangle formation, ready to blast anything not friendly into many tiny pieces. A few zombies were on the roads of the destroyed and bleak Raccoon City. Neo couldn't help but notice that the architecture was significantly different from New Mombassa, and not just culturally, but age-wise.

Neo recalled seeing pictures of some of these buildings in history books, old ones. _Yeah, undead monsters, deadly plagues, destroyed cities, and fucking old buildings. Doesn't get any weirder than this. _ Neo pulled out his pistol, and shot the zombies munching over the corpse of a young lady. They fell quickly to Neo's marksmanship.

A cloud of dust and dirt was forming a few hundred meters ahead, and closing fast. "What the hell?" asked Reaver, taking the words right out of Neo's mouth. Cam raised her sniper rifle to see what it was.

And in an instant, it was taken away from her, hitting the ground, and Cam was thrown into the ruined road. Reaver turned to see what happened to Cam, and in an instant was taken down. Neo flipped back, and lowered his shotgun. "Hold it!" he yelled. The cloud listened, and disappeared, revealing not a cloud, but an attractive European woman, with brownish hair, and blonde streaks running through. She had bright blue eyes. She was also hefting a nasty armament of ancient guns.

Neo gulped, but spoke in an commanding voice. "Who are you?" She looked over him in an instant.

"You're not an Umbrella soldier, are you?" she asked.

"Umbrella? Hell no, we're trying to take _down_ Umbrella. One

question: what is the year?"

She blinked, confused at a silly question as that. "2004, why?" Neo shrugged.

"That's what I thought. We come from 2553. We got a lot of explaining to do."

9. Darkness

Resident Halo

Chapter Eight

TIME: DATE RECORD ANOMALY\Date unknown.

Raccoon City, USA, North American Continent, Earth.

Former Headquarter City of the Umbrella Corporation.

****A****lice sat on the remains of a wrecked Volkswagon as Neo recounted his tale of the past weeks. Cam and Reaver awoke, and spun their weapons up at Alice, who snapped hers up in response. Neo held up a hand, explaining she was on their side. Guns lowered, but paranoia made them sit cautiously next to Neo. A finger on their triggers at all times.

Alice and Cam listened intently to Neo's recounting of his terrifying adventures. From his escape to the futuristic Hive, (which Alice, after hearing Neo mention, perked up slightly with greater interest), his reassignment into Umbrella Corporation's elite army, the loss of his squad to the zombie horde of New Mombassa, his meeting of Cam, and the nuclear destruction of New Mombassa.

Neo took a deep breath and sat down on wreckage, as Cam continued the tale, of her involvement with the Organization, what had happened to Raccoon City, and why they were sent here. Alice listened just as intently to Cam, and did not ask for her to repeat anything, nor did she blink at Cam once as she told her story. Neo noticed that Alice's attention seemed to be divided, as if she was listening for two or three other things as Cam spoke.

Reaver was completely and utterly silent, sitting cross-legged on a tire, his Rocket Launcher at his side. His gaze, however, never wavered off of Alice. As Cam finished minutes later, Alice smiled. "Funny, isn't it?" She asked, directing the question at Neo.

"I worked for Umbrella Corporation too, Head of Security, just like you, at one of the Hives."

Neo was alarmed. Reaver, held an "I-wanna-blast-you-now" look below his helmeted-face. Cam did not seem at all surprised or concerned at all at this revelation. Alice just smiled again. "But, also like you, I have no love for them. They did something to meâ€|something that made meâ€|"

Neo nodded. "I understand. You are indeed stronger, or faster, than anyone I've ever seen. Even the Spartans." Reaver looked at Neo with a momentary surprise, but he agreed.

"_'Spartans'_"?"

"In our time, there was a great, disastrous war, one that almost wiped humanity out. In 2525, our government, the UNSC made contact with an alien conglomerate called the Covenant. Before we even encountered them, our government was on the verge of rebellion and internal collapse. So, they implemented the Spartan-II Project, and abducted 75 children that they felt were genetically superior then everyone else." He said the word 'superior' with great disdain.

"They put them through years of the toughest training in the known universe, and genetically altered them. Only half of them survived the process." Neo paused, letting what he just said sink in.

"For the next twenty years, the Spartans fought against the Covenant, beating them in every single ground battle. The Spartans were a mythological figure to the men and women of the service, especially to my unit. By the war's end, only one was alive." Neo thought back to that day on Alpha Halo, less than a year ago.

The Guardian leapt up into the air, its energy sword activated and dived right at Neo. He raised his assault rifle, and pressed the trigger. Click. He looked at the ammo counter, which read '00'. Neo took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and felt his life flash before him. The taste of sweat and blood lingered fresh on his lips.

The Guardian let out a roar, but not one of victory, but of pain. Neo opened his eyes to see dozens of bullet holes in the Guardians chest. The energy sword fell from its hand. Neo held up a hand to shield the reflected light from his eyes as a green-armored figure, easily two meters tall towered over him.

_It saluted. "Master Chief SPARTAN-117, reporting, Lieutenant."

—

Alice said nothing while Neo spoke, and nothing after he finished.

_The poor bastards have it almost as hard as we, _I, _do, _ she thought. A brush of movement behind Alice alerted her, and she swung out her pistol. Neo, Cam, and Reaver, heard nothing, however, but they pulled out their guns not at the movement, but at Alice.

After realizing that she was responding to a threat, the trio lowered their guns and fanned out around Alice, pointing their deadly weapons all-around them. The movement of fur, feet, hatchets, wrecked cars being toppled over, and the occasional howl was what Alice heard as Neo decided to speak once more.

"So what the hell are _you _doing _here_" He asked.

Alice smiled and let out a brief chuckle as she holstered her pistol and pulled out a pair of Uzis. "I was looking for a way out of _here_ when I got separated from my group."

"Don't you think we should go looking for them?" Cam asked, activating her M6D pistol's custom flashlight. She aimed the light down an alleyway in front of her, and to Reaver's left. _Nothing yet, _she thought. _That's good._

Alice pulled out two clips and inserted them in the Uzis. "I don't care what happens to them, or _you." _She said, with a _click_, emphasizing her statement. With a loud _moan_ came hundreds of creatures. _There is no other word to describe the non-humanly bunch of creatures _as disfigured, dismembered, and _skeletal_ ex-members of the human race came lumbering at Alice, Reaver, Neo, and Cam.

Behind this bunch were dozens of lickers, mutant dogs, with blood dripping down their muzzles as they savored and devoured their latest catch. A hoot rang through the air, and a trio of _zombie owls_ swooped down and released a cry that struck fear into Cam. She shot wildly into the air at the three owls. Twelve shots rang true, and clipped the wings of the owls, and with one last call, they fell to the ground and died.

Cam ejected the clip and inserted another, but was too busy to notice the old man, half his face, an arm, and a section of his chest missing, exposing the rib cage underneath. He moaned, and reached up to Cam, and opened his decaying jaws. Reaver, however, noticed the man, and before Cam could shriek, he emptied a round into the other half of the man's face. It penetrated cleanly through the skull, and ejected the last of the cranial matter onto the alleyway behind Cam.

She nodded a thanks to Reaver, and spun around, firing into a group of children that were clawing their way to her. A licker leapt into the air, and pounced onto Neo, and let its tongue out and around Neo's neck. His pistol dropped and skidded a meter away. He tried to push the licker off his body with his feet, or at least get the tongue that was slowly sucking the life out of Neo off him, but the monster was too strong.

The licker opened up its massive jaw and prepared to bite into Neo with its large fangs, as the Neo felt the last of his life slowly slip away.

So this is how it ends, huh? What a way to go!.

_Bang! Bang! Bang! _A staccato of automatic fire sounded, and with a roar, the licker died, releasing its hold on Neo. He pushed the dead creature off his body, gasped, and then took a deep breath. He looked around for his pistol, found it, and scrambled up onto his feet.

He turned to the source of the automatic symphony, and saw Alice literally mowing down zombie after zombie after zombie. When she emptied her two clips, she simply ejected them, let the Uzis hang off her shoulder straps, and promptly kicked a zombie, a decaying old man, and right in the teeth. There was a loud, wet crack, as her foot connected, and the man toppled over.

Neo didn't have time to watch the rest of Alice's fight, as a group of zombies surrounded the ODST, moaning for his flesh and blood. Teeth and jaws ready to fulfill that moan. He raised his pistol and killed all of them with a bullet to the head.

Within a few minutes, all the zombies were dead. With the exception of a few startled wits and moments that would bring the ODST trio nightmares for the rest of their lives, the group was intact. Neo reloaded his handgun, and took a deep sigh. "What now?" he asked the

other three warriors.

Alice spoke before Reaver could open his mouth. "I have someone to find, my primary mission, that way I can get out of here."

Reaver turned to face Alice. "I say we should go find her friends. The more firepower we have, the better off we will be on our mission."

Alice's eyes flared red. "I don't care what you have to say."

Reaver was taken aback, and prepared to issue an equally blunt statement, but Neo raised his hands. Even through his helmet's air filters, he could smell the blood and decay of the zombie corpses, and their human victims. "I agree with Reaver. Although you have considerable skills, Alice, we will need the extra firepower. That way we can have a greater chance of finding whoever--"

"Angela Ashford," Alice interjected.

Neo paused. "This Angela Ashford, then we can take out the temporal field surrounding the city, rescue any other survivors--"

"Which is likely to be none."

Neo felt his temper rise, but he tried to remain none. "But we are ordered to look anyway. After we have fulfilled these objectives, then we can leave the city. Agreed?"

Cam and Reaver nodded. After a moment's contemplation, Alice hefted a shotgun, one of her various weapons she still possessed, that was still smoking from recent use. She considered, and even looked like she was going to point the shotgun at Neo, and blow his head clean off then and there, but she didn't. She simply hefted it onto her shoulder, and nodded, with a smile on her face. "Alright, Admiral Wannabe, we'll play it your way."

Alice motioned with her shotgun. "Lead on," and she gave a mock salute. Neo glanced at Reaver, and if his helmet were off, Neo would have seen Reaver's eyebrows rise at that very moment.

Neo did as Alice suggested, holstered his pistol, and pulled out his battle rifle, and lead the way into oblivion.

Major "Able" Cain stood with hands clasped on a railing, as he watched the latest Umbrella soldiers disembark from the sleek black helicopter. The troops quickly scrambled away from the helicopter, as the technicians onboard lowered multi-megaton crates and dropped them from the rear-mounted crane with delicate precision.

They each landed with a resounding thud that sent nearby dust and dirt flying into the air. The technicians, entering precise alphanumeric codes into the receivers on the sides of the crates, slowly opened each. Inside one was a creature similar to the one Neo encountered in New Mombassa, but with more antiquated weapons.

Nemesis, thought Cain, the pinnacle of Umbrella research and development. Evolved from the deadly Tyrant project. Augmented with superior weaponry, and armor, and a built in computer interface that

can be remotely controlled by our scientists, it is the ultimate military machine._

With a smirk on his face, he watched the other crates being opened up. One of the many other super secret projects undertaken by Umbrella Corporation was the development of battle armor. Battle armor similar to that of the MJOLNIR Mark V used by the Spartans 500 years later, but Umbrella did not know of that. Still, what was being opened up in the ten other crates was most likely even more advanced than the MJOLNIR.

The Nightshade Project, continued Cain, mentally, the _most-advanced piece of military hardware, _anywhere_ on Earth. Using a series of reactive circuits and polymers, the suit is interactive with the user, and is so reactive; that the user _feels _like the suit _is _their skin. Armed with a rapid-fire pulse laser, and a smaller version of the same on the claw of the suit, as well as a high-energy mortar and rocket launcher on the suit, it can take on any ground force single-handed. _

He smirked. As evidenced by the Nightshade, and Nemesis Projects, that even after the T-Virus, the boys at Umbrella R&D still had plenty of creative juice left. The mere military value alone of each project would yield countless trillions in government contracts for the Umbrella Corporation. But that wasn't Umbrella's primary concern, nor was it Cain's.

_Soon, our labs will have mastered the physics of Faster-than-Light travel, and we will be on the road to global, and galactic domination. _Even now, the Umbrella shipyards were busy secretly churning out warships for interstellar use. Cain reviewed the reports frequently, and according to the techies, the battlecruiser _Luna _was 80 operational, and would be fully online in a matter of months, maybe weeks, at best.

A brilliant flash filled the sky, and Cain was temporally blinded. He put his hand up to his eyes to shield them from the intense luminous flash. After a few brief moments, the flash subsided, and Cain lowered his hands from his face. He still couldn't see, but after blinking rapidly for a few seconds, Cain was able to see, albeit groggily.

What the hell! Thought the major. He mentally reviewed the list of Umbrella's secret projects, which was probably the only explanation why such a flash occurred. It took him a few minutes, as the list was rather extensive. _Ah, dammit. One of our mutant creatures must have activated the time distortion field at the Raccoon Hive. _He was quite aware that the T-Virus was released into the city. In fact, that was the reason why he was there. Umbrella felt the best way to test their new pet projects was against their other pet projects.

However, the activation of the time distortion field was going to complicate things greatly. It was never activated before, and in fact, developed _because _of ancient alien artifact found in the Atlantic. That artifact baffled Umbrella's top scientists for months, until they finally released it had gravity, and time-bending properties. It also released a lot of radiation, and even the top executives at Umbrella were reluctant to use it.

But all things had a use, and Umbrella Corporation hated not making advances, and so they placed it here, in Raccoon City. Cain looked up into the midnight sky, and judging from the fine filament that surrounded the city now, the field must be working. _Now if it is working correctly, or not, we shall see._ He also noticed three fiery streaks against the sky, and a lot more activity in the sky than was normal. _Seems it does._

Cain called one of the technicians over. "Get me Captain Sterling on the line," he said to the middle-aged man. "Tell him to get the Big Four ready. Get them suited up in the _Nightshade _armor, and to inspect that disturbance." He pointed up into the sky, where the three streaks were heading for the outskirts of the city.

He pulled out his binoculars as the technician pulled out a radio, and began relaying Major Cain's orders. "Also," continued Cain. "Get one of our _special _specimens in two of the suits. And ready the Nemesis. It's time we activate Project Alice." The technician nodded, relayed the orders, and walked away. Cain grinned evilly. "Now to put our technology to the test."

A loud scream penetrated the air, and an inhuman roar, as a very large team of Umbrella soldiers restrained two humanlike creatures that might have been human at one point, but were definitely _not _human. It took a great deal to restrain the monsters from biting the heads off of the Umbrella team, and for the Umbrella team to return the favor, and blast the _creatures' _heads clean off.

Dozens of technicians rushed over, trying to quickly lock in the creatures in a suit of Nightshade armor. Once they managed to get them in, they released the electronic restraints on the creatures, and sealed up the rest of the suit. With a hiss, the suit was locked, and the monsters secure inside each. They roared with something that sounded like a cat getting run over by a very heavy car, and it's claws scratching into a piece of metallic chalk. Cain had to cover his ears at such a horrendous sound, as its already loud volume was multiplied tenfold by the suit's external communications suite.

The creature let out a final roar, and activated the right-arm pulse laser. It also activated the suit's jump jets, and fried the metal locking on the feet that kept the suit in place. It raised the laser, and fired wildly, flash vaporizing the technicians and a few soldiers instantly. The corpses' ashes were still fresh in the air, as the surviving soldiers ran through the fire caused by the laser, and opened up with their machine guns.

The light rounds pinged off of the armor of the Nightshade. The creature simply activated the suits' mortar, and fired a round. Cain heard dozens of screams as the deck below him was coated in blood, limbs, and tissue. The Nightshade let out another inhuman roar, and activated its jumpjets once more, and flew into the night sky, firing wildly with its laser and mortar.

The other technicians and soldiers that were busy securing the other creature into the second Nightshade suffered similar fates. In a matter of seconds, the Umbrella workers were either a burning heap, or a pile of their own intestines. Their deaths however painful they might have been, were very, very quick.

The creature let off a round of its mortar at an Umbrella ammunition

cache, and the cache quickly caught on fire, and exploded. The second Nightshade then followed its brother, and flew into the night.

Cain, unlike his fellow coworkers on the floor below him, was unharmed. He took a breath of air, and released it in a sigh of relief. The Nemesis, and other Nightshade armor were still unharmed and intact. Cain activated the microphone that was on his left ear. "Get a team down here stat to clean up this mess. Secure the Nemesis, and get the Big Four down here. Have our orbital satellites track those two Nightshades."

The radio crackled static for a moment, but a scratchy voice responded a moment later. _"Sir, we've lost contact with our satellite network, as well as all other Umbrella facilities. We are picking up a high level of tachyons that are also interfering with our communications."_

Cain quickly lost contact with the man after that statement. He didn't believe he was killed, simply what he stated. The tachyons were interfering with the radio. Umbrella would get their objective completed, no matter the cost, Human or otherwise.

A second team of technicians backed by more troops armed with SMGs, sniper rifles, and rocket launchers came out from the complex doors below Cain. They quickly cleared the deck of the bodies, and resecured the perimeter. The technicians plugged in the hardware for the Nemesis, and with port-i-comps -new inventions by Umbrella not available on the commercial market of course- prepared its software.

The single blue eye on the creature's head opened, then turned red as the initial operating system was loaded onto the creature. Cain knew the real reason why the eye was blue: the Nemesis Project required a human being that had been thoroughly mutated by the T-Virus. Very similar to the experiments needed on its predecessor, the Tyrant.

The restraints of the Nemesis were released, and the ammunition was loaded onto the Nemesis's weapons. Cain chose that particular moment to descend from his lookout. The Nemesis was not a very pretty sight, looking like something out of a children's horror story. It had a green face, with one open eye, and the other stitched close. Its mouth sported massive teeth that were in a perpetual frown, but the teeth were also perpetually barred.

Major Cain was a tall person, but the Nemesis was easily three or four heads taller than he. Even if the major were in one of the Nightshade power armor, the Nemesis would still dwarf him. "Objectives," growled the creature. A technician typed in a series of commands and nodded to the Major as he approached the Nemesis.

"Primary objective: kill all S.T.A.R.S. members in the city," said the Major coolly. "And any interference you encounter."

"S.T.A.R.S.," the Nemesis growled. "Primary objective recognized."

"Secondary objective," continued the major, "locate and terminate Project Alice."

"Secondary objective recognized."

The major glanced over the Nemesis once more, and nodded back to the tech. "That will be all, load him on the plane, and drop him at the Umbrella building over the former Hive."

"Yes, sir," responded the technician. He motioned for the other techs to assist him in repackaging the Nemesis, and its weapons. Major Cain smiled. Today was going to be a bad day for Umbrella's enemies.

Carlos Olivera cursed. It was a bad night indeed for the former Umbrella operative left for dead by his employers. _If I live through this,_ thought Olivera, as he shot a zombie square in the right eye with his heavy pistol, _I _really_ need a vacation. _He jumped over a wrecked Ford and pulled the trigger of his pistol. _Click._

"Dammit, I _really_ need a _long_ vacation," he said aloud as he ejected the spent clip of the pistol, and not bothering to slam a new one home, hastily holstered it, and grabbed his assault rifle that was dangling around his shoulder. He fired a quick burst from the rifle at the oncoming zombies, and dropped a few of them from lucky headshots.

He wished he still had a few extra grenades left over, that way he could take care of the few _hundred_ or so zombies running, -well not literally running, but chasing after him nonetheless- at him, moaning for his blood, and just about what else it was that zombies ate.

It didn't really matter to Carlos, so long as he managed to get out of the godforsaken city in one piece. He fired a few more bursts over his shoulder as he kept on running down one of the many wrecked streets of the living dead city of Raccoon City.

After the brilliant flash and ambush, Alice wasn't the only one who got separated. Carlos got separated from Jill and LJ in the brief firefight, and now it seemed like the whole freaking _city_ was after him. Like Alice, he didn't really care what happened to the others, just that he survived.

His only chance for such survival was to find Angela Ashford, where she was believed to be at the Raccoon City Middle School, and get the hell out of there.

If he ran into Alice and the others â€" _alive_ _that is- at the school, then that would be good.

The rifle clicked empty, and he cursed as he ejected the clip from the rifle. He replaced the clip, and kept on running. Tonight was _definitely_ _not_ a good night for ex-Sergeant Carlos Olivera.

Jill Valentine wasn't fairing any better. The ex-S.T.A.R.S. member had a steady supply of ammunition for her Desert Eagle, and a steady supply of targets as well. She fired a round into the head of a middle-aged woman with tangled blond hair. The woman dropped to the bloody pavement of 32nd Street with a _thud. _

What happened next almost made Jill lose her lunch, as the woman's head rolled off her shoulders and into the zombie horde. One zombie

picked up the women's head, and took a chunk out of it. Jill dropped the zombie with a round, and dropped to one knee, and took out five more.

She replaced the clip of her pistol, turned, and ran. What looked like a mutant baboon jumped out of an Italian restaurant, with bloodstained claws at Jill. She screeched, and fired a round at its head. It took the round, fell to the ground, paused, and jumped back into the air at Jill, its mouth chattering in a primitive tongue.

She fired a trio of rounds at it, turned and ran, and fired three more shots at it. She looked up into the sky, and noticed three streaks fly over her. At first she thought they were meteorites, but then she noticed the metal parachutes detach off of them.

_Great, _Jill thought, more_ guests, most likely courtesy of the Umbrella Corporation._

Behind the trio of metallic streaks, a much, much larger one followed them, and behind that, dozens of smaller ones. She almost froze when she saw next, when two pairs of _jumping armor_, semi-reminiscent of the medieval era knights, were firing _lasers_ while they flew around building after building just a few hundred meters away.

She _did_ _freeze when she heard the blood-curling roar that emanated from the duo. Suddenly, the baboon-like creature knocked her down. She fiddled around for her pistol, while struggling to keep the baboon from biting her, its canines begging for the arterial area of her neck.

She found it, and with a chuckle, fired the rest of the clip into the stomach and head of the baboon. The baboon's chattering stopped, and she kicked the corpse off of her body.

"Dammit," she cursed. "And this was my favorite tube top too." She was referring to the blood and guts that had spattered all over her light blue tube top, black shorts, and knee-high boots.

She dug around for a towel in her handbag, and wiped off the blood. She discarded the soiled towel, and reloaded her pistol. She looked back behind her, the zombie horde still pursuing her, but also, still very far away. She looked at the road sign that read _35th Street_.

Well, at least I'm a helluva lot closer to Angela.

Above her, another light filled the sky, but not the brilliant flash from before, but the artificial lighting of an Umbrella Corporation heavy chopper.

"I really need to quit smokin'," remarked Jill, as she readied her pistol, and ran down 35th Street.

"What the hell was that?" asked Neo, as a second bright flash filled the sky.

Alice shrugged. "Seems like another one of those flashes that we've come to associate with complete and utter weirdness." More streaks filled the sky. "And company."

"Quite the party today, huh?" asked Cam.

"How far away from the school are we?" Neo asked Alice.

Alice grinned. "You're the leader, not me, why you asking?"

Neo shrugged. "You've been here in this city longer than I. You know the way around."

Alice laughed. "Well, at least you don't have _too _big of an ego like most guys I know. It's not far from here. We should be there in a few minutes."

"Good," Reaver said, "I'm-" he was cut off as a streak larger than the others flashed above. "What the hell is that?"

"I don't want to find out," Cam said. "Come on, we need to keep moving."

Neo and Reaver nodded, as Alice continued her march forward.

Lloyd Jefferson Wayne wasn't thrilled at all being alone. All he had were two custom pistols, and that shit wasn't gonna be enough to keep him alive from all the fighting and undead monsters that was the current population of Raccoon City. "Damn, LJ, what shit have ya got yourself into now?" The black man asked himself.

He had run away at top speed when the group got ambushed, and now he found himself wandering down a deserted street with equally deserted cars. Ahead of him was a wrecked out building that seemed unlocked. "Oh shit, yes! A place to crash!" He crouched down and slowly walked forward to the shack. He _swore _he heard gunfire nearby, and it wouldn't do him any good to get mistaken for a zombie by some trigger-happy dude.

Unbeknownst to him, a S.T.A.R.S. agent sporting a cowboy-style hat and sniper rifle with a _ton _of beer was perched up at the wrecked letters on the roof of the wrecked building. He spotted the black man in his scopes, lined him up in his sniper rifle andâ€¦

_Bang! _Nailed the zombie bitch that was sneaking up behind LJ, ready to take a bite out of him. "I got the powerâ€¦" the sniper chuckled, ejecting the spent round from his sniper, and loading another. He laughed again, and took a swig of beer.

LJ blinked for a moment, wondering if he was dead or alive, and realized the latter, spotted the sniper and ran out from the wrecked car. "Thanks man! I owe you one!" He ran inside the building, and casually walked around the corner of the buildingâ€¦

And right into a dozen guns of various type: ranging from SMGs, to pistols, to a full-fledged shotgun, "Damn! Maybe I was safer outside!" LJ remarked, holding his hands up. "You get them guns outta my damn face now, ya hear?" The officers, realizing he wasn't a zombie, did as the black man asked.

An elderly man with graying hair turned to one of the officers behind him, and pulled out a shotgun for LJ. LJ smirked, "Motherfucker please. Look," he said, pulling out his two golden pistols for

everyone to see, "my shit, is custom." The elderly man just gave a laugh, and tossed the shotgun back behind him to one of the officers. LJ laughed along with the officer.

"Sir!" shouted one of the S.T.A.R.S agents. "Look!"

On the roof of what once was a part-time motel, part-time hooker shack, Corporal Dan Sanders was in complete shock, and he blinked twice to make sure he wasn't seeing things through his sniper scope. Approaching the building was a 7 or 8-foot tall _creature _sporting a rocket launcher and fricking huge machine gun and a badass wardrobe. His shock quickly subsided as his training kicked in. Sanders aimed his sniper rifle for the creature's large head, and fired.

The round went through its head, but did little damage to the creature. It simply roared and kept on walking. He fired twice more with similar results. Frustrated, he let out a shout of his own, reloaded his sniper, and fired again, and again, and again, doing no damage to the monster.

It raised its rocket launcher at Sanders, and fired. "Ah, shit," were the last words coming out of Sanders' mouth as he attempted to jump off of the roof, and was blasted away by the rocket.

"What the hell was that?" asked LJ, as the shack shook from the rocket blast.

The dozen S.T.A.R.S. agents and LJ ran up to the front of the building. The S.T.A.R.S. agents were briefly surprised, but they sprung into action, taking refuge behind many of the overturned tables at the front of the shack. LJ just stood in the middle of their formation, guns in his hands, and mouth wide open.

"Fire!" shouted the elderly officer in charge of the team. Mechanical symphony filled the air, as hundreds of rounds flew from the team and right at the creature. Half of the rounds either pinged off of the thick armor, or went straight through it. The massive behemoth lowered its rocket launcher, and raised its machine gun.

It roared and pressed on the automatic's trigger. Hundreds of rounds soared through the night with accurate precision at the S.T.A.R.S. agents, but danced by LJ. In seconds, the S.T.A.R.S. agents were dead, with Lloyd Jefferson Wayne, standing in the middle of it all, guns in his hands raised to his ears, crying for his mommy.

As the sound of the automatic's signature died down with the bodies, LJ opened up his eyes and looked around. _Sweet Jesus, I'm still alive! _ But the creature was still there, and it roared once more, its weapon aimed squarely at LJ. "Shit!"

The creature knew no name. It did not remember anything of its previous life. Only its objective: kill all S.T.A.R.S. agents, Alice, and anyone that threatened those objectives. The black man in front armed with two puny pistols, however, did not fill that criteria.

****Nemesis 1.0.0 ****

Scanningâ€|

Target acquired.

Analyzingâ€¦!

At that moment in time, LJ thought it'd be a good idea to be a coward and give up. He dropped his pistols. "Oh man, don't hurt me. I got a wife and two kids, I'm tellin' ya! I haven't done anything! I wouldn't hurt a fly, or a badass dude like you!" The creature roared.

"I'm sorry!" LJ started crying. "Don't hurt me!"

Threat Analysis: Noncombatant.

The Nemesis turned around, and walked off, in search of fresh targets to fulfill its master's orders.

To LJ's disbelief, the badass had stared at him for a moment, and then turned away. _Did I really scare him away? _LJ thought. When he was certain that the creature had gone away, he picked up his pistols, and ran out of the building, and into the bloodstained streets under the watchful gaze of an equally blood-red moon. It started raining.

"Ah, shit," mumbled LJ, "Can things get any worse?" A distant roar answered his question. LJ just kept running and mumbling expletives.

"Sir?" asked the Umbrella pilot at the controls of the unmarked black Dropship Gamma 018.

Mark McCormick came out of his daze. "Yes, Lieutenant. What is it?"

"We've arrived at Raccoon City."

"Is it the right date?" McCormick inquired.

The pilot consulted a few instruments on his console. "Yes, sir. It is. November 12th, 2004."

McCormick grinned. "Excellent. The men are standing by with the Nemesis, yes?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good."

McCormick inquired no more. The men and women that were with him today were the best. They knew their job, and McCormick knew his. It was time to take care of some unfinished business.

In the massive cleared out hanger of the Pelican behind McCormick, a creature gave a perpetual evil grin. To what it was giving the grin to, or for, no one would be sure. Much less the Umbrella Shock Troopers that had the "pleasure" of being stuck with it.

The creature knew nothing of its previous life. Only the order of its masters, and that was also only one thing: kill the ODS known as Neo, and anyone that got in his way from doing it.

End
file.